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TREMAINE,

OR THE

MAN OF REFINEMENT.

FOURTH EDITION.

Robert Plumer Ward

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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English

TREMAINE,

OR, THE

MAN OF REFINEMENT.

CHAP. I.

A PORTRAIT.

" I am combined by a sacred vow."

SHAKSPEARE.

RETURNED home, Woodington never appeared so lonely in the eyes of Tremaine. He passed an uneasy evening, and an uneasy morning the next day; could settle to nothing; and went to his library as he generally did, to find comfort, and as he often did, not knowing where to look for it.

His chair, which was what the upholsterers call an Indulgent, (a great deal too indulgent for study) an open Cicero, a Horace, and a Shaftesbury, seemed to invite him to proceed with them where he left off;—

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but he did not know where he left off, and they never had so few charms.

"No," said he, "I'll none of ye—I'll to the Forest of Ardennes," taking up a volume of Shakspeare; "I'll to the garden, to the woods—to the seat that looks on the most beautiful spot in England!"

He meant a bench which he had lately fixed at the end of the terrace, commanding the best view of Evelyn Hall.

As he paced back through the rooms, Mary, and all that Mary, and even that old Vellum had said in the preceding morning, revived in his memory.

"I agree," said he, "(for why should I deny it?) that Belmont was a melancholy place, and that I was dying there of hyp!—I agree too, how fine it would be, if such a lady were at Woodington! for—Woodington wants a mistress. Alas! I agree too," looking at himself in a pier glass, as he passed it, "*If I was not so old and so solemn!*—As to the age," he went on, still looking at himself, "it is not so very great! I am by no means so old as her father! and as to the solemnity—to be sure she has many notions that must change—and they *will* change," said he, flinging out of doors, and hastening to the end of the terrace.

"I will here," said he, sitting down, "enjoy all those charms of a reverie, such as that witch described,"

—and he closed his eyes, only to open them now and then upon the chimnies of Evelyn. But alas! a reverie is not to be purchased, nor controlled, nor commanded; neither rank, nor riches, nor shining before men, nor wisdom in one's generation, nor in one's own eyes, nor wisdom of any sort, can bind this wayward sprite, who comes and goes at his pleasure, and flits before the charmed sense of a poor student, building his château en Espagne, fifty to one more readily than he will to oblige the king of Spain himself.

It is quite certain that Mr. Tremaine, great as he was, and using all "appliances and means to boot," could not catch the reverie he sighed for, so as to hold it for a moment. He had risen for the fourth time from the bench he was sitting on,) which he said was a very uneasy bench) before he entirely gave the matter up.

"I know not why," said he, "but the plank in the scarlet-bean arbour was pleasanter than this."

He looked at it again, examined its construction, quarrelled with his carpenter, said he would have a new one, and was actually returning to the house to give orders, when, to his utter astonishment, (though perhaps nothing in the world could be less astonishing) he saw the Doctor and his daughter standing before him.

To say he reddened, or looked foolish, or hesitated

when he paid his compliments, would be to shock the good breeding of which he was master;—but as certain it was, that he did not pay those compliments with his usual ease.

"I fear we break in upon your privacy," said Evelyn.

"At least most agreeably," replied he.

"We presumed," observed Miss Evelyn, "upon the permission of Monsieur Dupuis, who, when he went one way to seek you, gave us leave to go another. We asked which way you went; to which we had the satisfactory answer, 'He no know himself.'"

"From all which we suspected," said Evelyn, looking at his book. "that you were, as we find you, enacting the part of Master Touchstone in the Forest of Ardennes."

"I am much obliged to you for making me a clown, when at least I fancied myself a duke," said Tremaine.

"The resemblance, pardon me, is perhaps nearer than you are aware of. Nay, don't be angry, for it was Georgy there first pointed it out."

"Me! Oh papa!—sure you—indeed Mr. Tremaine—"

"I have no doubt the resemblance is very just," said Tremaine, with rather more politeness in his manner than Georgina was disposed to like.

"*Savoir*," said Evelyn; and he began to read.

"And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone? Truly, shepherd, in respect to itself it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in court, it is tedious."

"And all this is fastened upon me by Miss Evelyn! and not Miss Evelyn's father!" observed Tremaine.

"Perhaps it lay between us both," cried the Doctor; "but you will at least allow that the portrait is a very good portrait."

Now Tremaine allowed no such thing; so to turn the conversation, he asked what had brought him the honour of their company so soon.—"Can all that *business* which employs you so much, be finished so soon in a morning?"

"We are going to Lord Bellenden's," replied Evelyn, "which is fifteen miles; he dines early, to let people get home again, and we want you to go too."

"I am not invited," returned Tremaine.

"'Tis a public day," said Evelyn.

"And would you have me on that account attend it!—excuse me, my good friend; you little know me

—I consider a public day as little less than an insult! —Who is this Lord Bellenden, that ——"

"Lord Bellenden," said Evelyn, stopping him, "is a very worthy nobleman, of immense fortune, and therefore of influence,—placed by the King at the head of the Riding,—living, but not shutting himself up, upon his estate."

"I am going to be schooled, I see," cried Tremaine—"pray spare me."

"I will," answered the Doctor, "provided you will allow there is neither harm nor insult in such a man opening his house to *all* his neighbours, and telling them he has done so."

"What, in the newspapers!" cried Tremaine. "No! I am not proud ——"

"Not in the least," retorted the Doctor; "those who ever said so wronged you unmercifully."

"I am, however, I hope, above being advertised for as a guest," said his friend. "Let us see!—'There will be public days at Bellenden House every Thursday for the next month!'"

"So says the paragraph, which, being interpreted, means, that my Lord Bellenden being very lonely, and not knowing what to do with himself in his fine house, is very willing to be diverted by any one who will take the trouble to come twenty or thirty miles to divert him."

"You forget," said Evelyn, "that he diverts, as well as is diverted, and that he is as much honoured as he honours. So much for pride: *Au reste*, neighbours and families who see one another seldom, have a pleasant opportunity of meeting under the auspices of a person of rank, power, and good breeding; and all that promotes good neighbourhood cannot but be good in itself."

"Yes! but to be advertised for!"

"Well, are you not advertised for in town?"

"As how?"

"Whenever my lady A—, or Mrs. B—, sends a small card to your house, not treating you with the least ceremony of compliment, not even honouring you with an invitation, but merely apprising you, (gracious intimation!) that she is at home!—and yet you go for all that!"

"That is not in the papers," answered Tremaine.

"It is not always out of them," said Evelyn; "at least I have sometimes observed with a preface of,—'we are authorised to say, Lady A.'s assembly is put off, or Lady B.'s is put on; or that if it rains, the Duke of D—'s breakfast will not take place at the C— Villa.'—Now what is this but advertising in the papers, or what does it want but a 'Whereas,' in large letters, to give it a place in the Hue and Cry itself?"

"You may overpower, but you cannot convince

me," answered Tremaine, in a tone which shewed that though he might not be convinced, he was at least much shaken. "Yet how can I make you believe I am not proud?"

"By going," said Georgina, with a look which did more than all her father's argument; "by going, for it is quite a curricle day———"

"But I have no curricle," replied Tremaine, "and if I had, fifteen miles driving in such heat would be insupportable."

"Your barouche, then," said Georgina, with a smile there was no withstanding.

"You drive me out of all my principles," exclaimed the proud man, acquiescingly.

As the carriage was getting ready, "You will give us places, I suppose, and I shall at least gain by it," said Evelyn.

"No you won't, for we will have no arguments," said Tremaine, "not one the whole way."

It is not above two miles from Bellenden House, and as the road turns suddenly to the left, branching off from the turnpike towards the outer gates of the park, that one of those substantial summer-houses, which our ancestors were so fond of building sixty or seventy years ago, filled up the exact corner of the two roads, so that a window to the south, and another to the west, commanded a view of every man, woman, child, horse, higgler's cart, stage, or gentle-

man's coach, that proceeded from London to York, or from York to London, or from any part of that line to the seat of the Earl of Bellenden.

This summer-house had been a very fine thing in its time, and was built by old Sir Hildebrand Homestead, with a profusion of red brick, white stone copings, white pilasters, and carved cornices; and here of a summer evening, Sir Hildebrand used always to cool himself with a pipe. His son, who forty years before the time we speak of, and indeed for some years afterwards, was called young Sir Hildebrand, succeeded to the estate; and though he left off smoking, as smoking went out of fashion, yet he used the summer-house as much as his father.

This gentleman was remarkable for the most insatiable curiosity. Not a tale or an anecdote—not a marriage, a courtship, or bastardy—not a sale or mortgage of an estate—not a trial in civil court or crown court—not a dinner, or even what was eaten for dinner, within fifty miles,—I might almost add, within fifty years of him, but he knew in all the exactness of verity, and could repeat with all its various readings, as he had it from different relators. And yet for the last five-and thirty years he had never stirred from his own gate. His powers both of talking and of listening were inexhaustible, and, as we may suppose, were well exercised by the idle gossiping people in the neighbourhood, and by almost all

travellers that came near the summer-house, at one or other window of which he was to be found planted generally from breakfast till dinner, which was still always at two o'clock, and from dinner till the evening closed in—when, in summer,—he always retired to bed.

The only inconvenience attending this pleasure was that as talking is a thirsty employment, it occasioned among the lower orders especially, (who were always observed to be most kind in their communications) a considerable tax upon his ale and beer. This however was not minded by Mr. Jerome the butler, and to do him justice, not much more by the Baronet himself.

It may be thought, perhaps, that he had a vacant mind, or broken down body, and that this was his mode of amusing them. But no! he had considerable reading, had studied, and seen the world when young, and had even been elected a bencher of one of the inns of court; while on the other hand, he had never known an hour's illness from his birth to this time,—when in his seventy-sixth year, he was still hale and hearty.

Why he had retired so early, or why at all, except because it was his humour, and that an Englishman, especially if rich has a right to his humour, never could be exactly ascertained. It was said indeed in the neighbourhood, that an early disappointment with a lady who had made another choice, (in vulgar lan-

guage jilted him,) first drove him from London; when for a long time he let his beard grow, and lived in his nightcap, with no companions but his books and servants, the latter of whom were all of the male kind: for such for many years was his resentment against the sex, that not a female was admitted into his household. This however went off, and it was supposed that he might have returned to the world, and even married, had he not, as was also supposed, bound himself by a vow never to stir from his own house; while his shyness towards ladies of his own rank was never to be conquered. It was indeed confidently reported that in his sixty-fifth year he had made an offer to his cookmaid; who taking him for a conjuror, from his fondness for mathematical instruments, was afraid to accept him.

It may be supposed that a public dinner at a great man's, and that so close to him, was an occasion too agreeable to his temper to be neglected. It was in fact a sort of gala; an event to interest both himself and his whole house; who accordingly on these occasions generally assembled upon the lawn before his door, for some time before my lord's hour of dining, or the first carriage had given the signal that the company had begun to assemble. On these occasions too, he thought to give additional importance to the day by assuming a sort of costume, only known at these times. Thus, for the last twenty years, he had

appeared in a white, or rather stone coloured coat, with a pink silk lining; his grey curls were taken out of rollers, and a little bag placed on his short queue; the whole giving him an air and manner, by no means other than that of a gentleman.

On these days the summer-house was abandoned, and he was generally seen attended by his butler, leaning over the gate that opened into the road, in order the better to converse with, or receive the compliments of such friends as were still left him, and who usually made a point of stopping for a few moments to shew that they were alive, and to ascertain that he was so too; a ceremony not at all less necessary in their opinion, from its being utterly unknown to whom he meant to leave his fortune.

Such conferences, particularly if there was any thing beyond the very commonest topics to communicate, rendered these days the happiest in the old man's life.

This gentleman was known to Dr. Evelyn, who never came near his gate without making him happy, as Sir Hildebrand said, by telling him where he had been, and where he was going; and having some time before acquainted him with Tremaine's arrival, and seclusion at Woodington, so as to excite much of his curiosity, he knew he could not do him a greater benefit than by bringing about a visit, if visit it could be called: for Sir Hildebrand never suffered his

guests, particularly if there were ladies among them, to proceed farther than the lawn, or at most, into the summer-house.

During the mile or two before they came to Homestead Hall, Evelyn had informed Tremaine of all these particulars; "and if you have a mind to make a harmless old man very happy," said Evelyn, "you will give him a call."

"Good Heavens! for what?" exclaimed Tremaine; "are we not going to be overwhelmed enough at a great country dinner, without the addition of an old quiz, who from your account, can scarcely derive respectability even from his age?"

"Odd fish you know are my game," replied Evelyn.

"But not mine," said Tremaine: "I am quite satisfied with your history, and have no curiosity to see the subject of it."

"I believe," retorted Evelyn, "you would be satisfied with Buffon's history of the whale, and not go to see one, if it were even to be thrown on the shores of the Humber."

"Not if it smelt like its own Greenlanders," answered Tremaine.

"Well, but Sir Hildebrand is a subject for a philosopher, and you are a philosopher; he supplies food to the mind," said Evelyn.

"As much as your whale, to the body," rejoined

Tremaine; "and when you eat a bit of whale, I'll study Sir Hildebrand. I beseech you, do not let us stop;—it will be an odious waste of time."

"I have no doubt you'll employ it better with Dr. Juniper or Sir Marmaduke Crabtree at Bellenden House, for the half hour we have to spare," remarked Evelyn.

"Horrible alternative," answered Tremaine—and at that moment Georgina saying she should like to see one, of whose oddity she had heard so much, he instantly gave way, and with silent, but not inexpressive politeness, ordered the postilions to stop at Homestead gate.

"But will he admit a lady?" said Georgina.

"Not without leave first asked and obtained," replied her father.

By this time the carriage drew up, and Sir Hildebrand, who was leaning over the gate, greeted them with a bow of the last century. He was tall and spare, by no means of vulgar appearance, and there was still a quick glancing eye, which looked as if it had enjoyed better times.

"This man may be odd, but he is not a quiz," said Georgina to herself.

Though Georgina was thus amicably disposed, he shrunk back at the sight of her, and reddening, and at the same time with a constrained sort of smile, was bowing them away, when Evelyn said—"I

am come to present my neighbour Mr. Tremaine and my daughter Miss Evelyn to you Sir Hildebrand."

A slight bow of acquiescence was all his shyness permitted, for in truth his eye was caught by Tremaine's gay equipage.

"I thought it was not yours," said he to Evelyn; "I think I never saw four such beautiful bays;—so well matched, so full of blood. The harness too, and the whole together, beat Lord Bute's when he first went to court on the Accession."

"An odd reception this," said Tremaine, yet seemingly not displeased.

"What is a poor damsel to do?" cried Georgina: "will he admit us or not?"

It was a question not unnatural, for Sir Hildebrand had shrunk away from the gate, and was mounting the stairs of the summer-house, looking back every now and then, as if to see if he was followed.

"You have gained much by your visit," cried Tremaine, smiling; "I wonder how this philosophy of yours will turn it to account."

"I don't understand it," said the Doctor;—when Mr. Jerome, who had been at the gate all the time, with the best bow that sixty years could muster, informed them that Sir Hildebrand would be glad to

see them in the summer-house, and the lady might come in, if she pleased.

"But pray, friend, how could you find this out?" asked Evelyn, "for he has not said a word to you."

"I understand his honour's manner," answered the butler, with another bow.

"We must let every man speak in his own language," remarked Evelyn, getting out.

"You lead me like a school-boy," exclaimed Tremaine, handing Georgina; and the party followed to the summer-house. They were here agreeably surprised. A large room, or rather library, with many hundreds of books, an orrery, globes, models, maps, and all that bespoke well-educated retirement. And in one recess there was collected an assortment of the finest old porcelain.

The most surprising thing was the master, who having at first, with rather an impressive air, reached chairs for them with his own hands, immediately betook himself to one of the windows, out of which he looked for some minutes, as if no one had been within. No one spoke, so much were they occupied with observation; when turning round, Sir Hildebrand called out, as if suddenly struck, "Two turtles and two haunches to-day, besides peaches from the new forcing-house. There ought to be a large company, but I have seen nobody but the high sheriff

go by yet." Then turning suddenly to Tremaine, he said, "I knew your grandfather well. I am glad to see you; but I am sorry you shut yourself up. You have made no vow I hope. A bad thing to tempt heaven—a very bad thing, take my word for it."

Pausing a little, he added, with rather a vacant look, "I see the world, however, very well; do you know I have sometimes counted thirty-seven coaches and chaises in a day, going by this window; and I can always tell if there is any good news, before Lord Bellenden himself; for he cannot see the ribbons in the coachmen's hats."

"Then assuming a wiser tone, "Let me give you a piece of advice," said he, "Mr. Tremaine: You see there a great deal of knowledge—" (pointing to his books and instruments;) "vain, if it is not useful; and not useful, if not communicated."

"Well!" continued the humorist, "only don't shut yourself up. If I dared go out of my gate, I would have better company than Jones or Dobbs."

These were afterwards explained by Evelyn to be the curate, and a neighbouring farmer, who for the last seventeen years had dined with Sir Hildebrand every Sunday; the only recreation he allowed himself, beyond the chance passengers he met with at his gate.

"But," proceeded he, "I go to see no one, and

therefore no one comes to see me; there is a give and take in all things, and I do as well as I can. I am in the commission. and nobody is the securer for it: I read, and nobody is the wiser for it; I am rich, and nobody is the better for it. This is bad, very bad, Mr. Tremaine. I see there is another carriage; Lord Bellenden must be very happy; but it will cost him a deal of money, a deal of money!—Old Jones says, there is more waste in his kitchen in a month, than would support him all the year round."

Afterwards, whispering Evelyn, loud enough to be heard, however, by all; "They say he stews five hams into one turtle—and yet the estate can pay:" then observing Georgina looking at him with some pity and a great deal of kindness, he sat mute for several minutes, twisting his thumbs, like a school-boy corrected by the glance of his master.

Evelyn eyed him with tenderness, and in pure compassion wishing to change the conversation, said he was glad to see him so well.

"Yes!" he replied, "I am pure well,—but not so happy as I was: people don't come to talk to me at the gate as they used, and nobody minds me—yet I have five thousand a year, and no one but a fourth cousin."—Then regarding Georgina with more courage than hitherto, "you say she is your daughter;—well, she is very pretty, and seems very gentle; but have a care," and whispering in Evelyn's

ear, he added, "no one can trust 'em." After this, as if exhausted by the effort, he fell again into silence.

The whole party were affected, and Evelyn rose to go—"Stop," said Sir Hildebrand to Georgina—"You seem, as I said, gentle: you seem honest too, and would not say one thing and do another. I am much obliged to you for coming to see me. I never saw but one that looked so handsome and so good, and she turned out ill." Here the old man sighed. "You are not married, I perceive, for you want a ring; then unlocking a small cabinet, he took out a diamond hoop, with a ruby in the middle of it of considerable value, and fitting it on her finger, before she seemed aware of what he was about, "there," said he, "if ever you want a friend you may come again." After which bowing to them all, he said, "I think I have counted all the carriages that have gone by, and yours will be the fourth."

Both Evelyn and Tremaine thought it was time to leave the poor Baronet to himself; and Georgina having looked at her father, and perceiving that he wished her to accept the ring, would have returned her thanks; but she was not only very much affected, but the giver hung his head in even sheepish distress, and begged her so awkwardly to say nothing about it, that she was silent—contenting herself with a courtesy and a look, which was not thrown away

upon Sir Hildebrand, much less upon Tremaine, who translated that look into ten thousand softnesses, every one of them winding into his own heart.—The Baronet himself seemed roused by it, for he immediately said, with an air of something like dignity, "If you are going, at least let me have the honour of assisting you," and actually gave his hand to her with a manner which a Lord Chamberlain need not have blushed at. Georgina could not help pressing it as he put her into the carriage;—which made him falter and blush, so as to disable him from saying a word to his male guests: and many were the speculations from the windows of the hall, and the walls of the court-yard, which were crowded with his servants and tenants, as Tremaine and his friends drove off to Bellenden House.

The party were for many minutes silent after leaving Homestead. Georgina was affected, even to tears, with what she had seen; Evelyn was much impressed, and Tremaine thoughtful: so that Lord Bellenden's lodges were almost in sight before the train of reflection was broken. At length Evelyn could not help exclaiming, "a noble mind seems here o'erthrown."

"I own I expected something very different," said Tremaine with emotion.

"Poor fellow!" cried Georgina, as she looked at her ring, and could not help a tear falling upon it,

which she was unwilling to wipe away. "I will keep it for his sake."

The emotion did not make either of her companions less thoughtful.

"You see, my friend," said Evelyn with a serious air "what it is, as this poor gentleman observed, to tempt heaven. It is evident that the report of the neighbourhood is true; and that in a temporary fit of disgust, perhaps of madness, from disappointment, he bound himself to this way of life by a vow. The consequence is, that by brooding over in solitude what he might have dissipated by business, he nursed himself into a humourist, and has led a useless, and, I should think, an unhappy life."

"The latter does not appear," said Tremaine, rousing; "he seems to have been social at least at his gate: and, as long as he had plenty of gossip, not to have been unhappy."

"Granting that," replied the Doctor, "to what indeed, as you sometimes say, is a man of education reduced, when, to count the stage-coaches, or busy one's self about another man's kitchen, has become, perhaps a serious employment?"

"May he not, from your own theory," said Tremaine, "be happy?"

"If he may," answered Evelyn, "which perhaps I ought not to deny, it at least proves the soundness of the theory itself; for you see his solitude, unoc-

cupied as it is, forces him upon the world, as far as he can mix in it, for the only relief he enjoys,—and he is busy about his fellow men, though only passengers in a post-chaise, whom he does not even know."

Tremaine was about to reply, when, as they had now long passed the lodges, Lord Bellenden's fine place opened upon their view, and the conversation stopped.

CHAP. II.

AN EXCLUSIVE.

" If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,
" You are no maiden, but a monument."

SHAKSPEARE.

The visit to Homestead had deranged part of the plan of our guests—which was to have a walk in the beautiful grounds before dinner, and afterwards to dress. Only the latter could be effected; and the whole company had nearly assembled in the saloon, by the time they presented themselves.

Lady Bellenden, who regarded Georgina with both tenderness and esteem, received her with the

most affectionate politeness—introducing her to her daughter Lady Gertrude Bellenden's particular attentions; and adding, as she put their hands together, "How I wish this moment of introduction between you two may lead to a friendship hereafter."

Each of the young ladies, thus called upon, surveyed the other; calculating, according to the quickness of eye or penetration of judgment that either was endowed with, how far this amiable wish might be realized. But whether from the restraint which the sudden, and public expression of it imposed, or from the want of sufficient experience and discrimination in the youthful parties, neither young lady discovered much that tended to raise hopes of its accomplishment.

Lady Gertrude was in her twenty-first year; of uncommon beauty of face, which was absolutely brilliant with the finest white and red in the world. She was tall and graceful, but there was no particularity of air, manner, or countenance, that spoke even after acquaintance, as if there was much within, except a very high idea of her own consequence.

Her mother, who had long been in bad health, had been residing some years on the Continent; and these were the most critical years of Lady Gertrude's life; for she had been left during that whole period under the care of her aunt, the Duchess of Mandeville, who was considered the very mirror

of good-breeding by the most highly finished gentlewomen of the age. All the world gave praise to this excellent aunt, for having added to the cares and anxieties which three daughters of her own occasioned, by undertaking the education of another young female out of pure kindness to her sick sister.

As for the education, it was as perfect as the best masters, for personal, and the very best French (or rather Franco-Italian) governess, for mental accomplishments, could make it. The peculiar province of the Duchess was to form the manners, the *ton de société, les usages;* and in this she was universally acknowledged to shine an unrivalled Queen, whom all endeavoured to please, study, and imitate.

With these advantages Lady Gertrude could not fail to profit much; and every body was anxious to know, before she was presented, how she would come out. She came out, at once, and in full maturity of fastidiousness, a finished *Exclusive.*

The Duchess, in fact, was the most refined of women. Refinement was her favourite study—her favourite word. It was what she always recommended, always preached, and always practised; and although to her bitter disappointment her own daughters were more disposed to imitate their father, whose habits were rather those of a country gentleman than one at the head of the Peerage, she found

consolation in the aptitude of her niece to follow all her precepts, and all her example.

Such was the being, for whom, in her maternal solicitude, the amiable, as well as sensible Lady Bellenden, wished to acquire a friend in Georgina. Such the appearance and manners, which Georgina was requested to love.

Now, though Miss Evelyn had the most perfect *natural* good-breeding that ever adorned a daughter of nature, and had none of the ungraceful shyness which belongs to rusticity, yet she had certain notions of certain things, which she sometimes found *inconveniently* serious. On the present occasion, she had been desired by a woman of the first consequence in her circle,—one to whom she always looked up with the sincerest esteem, her own known friend, and at this time her hostess,—to love her daughter as a friend. This was a word which, to her, always sounded most serious, as well as most sweet; insomuch that she could no more think of trifling with herself in chusing a friend, than if she had been called upon to chuse a husband. In point of fact, she had never had the opportunity of chusing, or even thinking of one or the other; for her father had so engrossed, so filled her mind, and was himself so absolutely devoted to her, that he had hitherto supplied the place of both. Yet she had often thought a friend of her own sex, and about her own age, would

be very delightful as well as very natural; and, in the recesses of her boudoir, or in a lonely walk, she had sometimes yielded to the most natural wish of a sensible heart—the wish for a companion that could partake, with equality of interest, her amusements, her cares, and even her inmost secrets.

When, therefore, Lady Bellenden uttered her impressive wish, it conjured up a train of ideas long pondered and cherished by Georgina, of the deepest interest to her mind, and of the very utmost importance to her happiness. She surveyed Lady Gertrude as a being who might influence her future life,—in whom she was to read, as in a book, all those happy reciprocities of sentiment, which her own pure heart and warm fancy had lately been so pleased to meditate. No wonder, then, that she looked embarrassed with the force of an emotion which no one, and least of all, Lady Gertrude, could understand; and which, indeed, was the very opposite to any by which Lady Gertrude herself felt she could be influenced.

The *abord* of the two ladies was, therefore, very different; and, it must be owned, with all our partiality to Georgina, that, in the eyes of some of the bye-standers, *refinement*, in this instance, might seem to have the advantage over *simplicity*. It was not that there was any intrinsic superiority, even of manner, on the part of Lady Gertrude: it was simply that she was unmoved, while Miss Evelyn seemed

labouring with something which, spite of herself, was restrained. She meant to be a great deal more than civil, yet kindness would not flow; while Lady Gertrude, who did not even intend much civility, felt no kindness at all.

While their hands were yet together, and Lady Bellenden had scarcely withdrawn her's, Lady Gertrude, with a very short and abrupt courtesy, said in a low voice, and with most fashionable nonchalance, "My mother is very good"—and when Georgina said something about her being always so, and that this was not the least instance of it, she replied, adjusting her tucker, "We dressed in such a hurry, I really don't know whether I'm dressed or not."

The conversation there languished, and would perhaps have died away altogether, had not Georgina, after surveying her new friend rather anxiously, observed, by way of something to say, upon the largeness of the company that was assembled. Lady Gertrude immediately applied to her eye-glass, and after surveying them, exclaimed, "They seem a strange heterogeneous set, as they always are upon these occasions; but I suppose you know them all, Miss Evelyn—in which you have the advantage, for I really am not acquainted with one in the room except Mr. Tremaine,—who is always so excessively fine, there's no knowing whether one knows him or

not. I believe you came with him. They say he is worse than ever.

The glass was then directed exclusively to Tremaine; and one or two gentlemen approaching with their wives and daughters, to salute this daughter of the house, she replied to their civilities with a most freezing, and scarcely perceptible bend of the head, and leaving both them and her new friend, made her way to that part of the room where Tremaine was engaged in conversation with Lord Bellenden.

CHAP. III.

HALF AN HOUR BEFORE DINNER.

"All the men and women merely players."

SHAKSPEARE.

As there was nothing in a young lady joining even a *tête-à-tête*, of which her father formed one of the parties, Lady Gertrude thus presented herself to Tremaine's notice without the smallest breach of decorum, or even derogation to her dignity; so that she put her arm within her father's with the prettiest air of independence and apathy imaginable, without seeming to notice who was his companion, except,

indeed, that she was ready to receive any notice that he might take of her. But to say truth, the gentleman was her equal at this play; for though he was in fact well known to her, and had not seen her for eighteen months, he only made her the slightest inclination (for it could not be called a bow), in which his chin was in fact the only part of the body that moved. He then instantly pushed through the row of 'squires and clergymen that intercepted his way, till he found himself by the side of Georgina, who was listening with all meekness to the protecting speeches of an exceedingly great lady indeed.

This was a high-bred dame, who had arrived a few minutes before in a coach and six. Stopping at Boroughbridge, in her way to Lancashire, she had heard that Lord Bellenden, with whom she was well acquainted, had a public day, and had sent to say she would pay him a visit, if Lady Bellenden would admit her in a traveller's dishabille. Lady Bellenden had of course returned a proper compliment, and the dishabille she appeared in was a richly trimmed silk pelisse, while her hair was adorned with a considerable number of diamonds, the fruits to her father, of many German, and other foreign missions, and which she often boasted could purchase the whole dominion of many a German sovereign.

To this lady, Georgina had been introduced by Lady Bellenden, when the latter found, to her very

great vexation, that Lady Gertrude had abandoned her almost in the moment of her introduction. She therefore presented Georgina to her guest with more than common earnestness, as one of her most favourite young friends, and her name alone informed Mrs. Neville, who was not unmindful of these matters, that she was of one of the oldest families, not merely in the county, but in England itself. This and a countenance and manner that had the art of fixing high and low in their favour, the moment they were beheld, and were not thrown away upon Mrs. Neville (who was what is called an exceedingly clever woman), drew down from her, very voluble offers of any thing she could do (and she could do a great deal), to make London or Belvidere Castle agreeable to her, if ever she came to *her* part of the world.

Georgina was replying with as much civility as she could muster, where her mind was not fixed (for in truth she was thinking and wondering at Lady Gertrude still), when Tremaine joined them.

"Good heavens! Mr. Tremaine!" said Mrs. Neville, "you here!—we thought you had been dead and buried above a year ago, in Northamptonshire."

Tremaine hardly made a salute of recognition to Mrs. Neville, though they had been so long separated.

"I have been inviting Miss Evelyn to Belvidere,"

continued Mrs. Neville, not seeming to notice his coldness, and if she will come to the assizes, could promise her something gay: our rooms will be more magnificent than ever. But I am this moment under considerable anxiety."

"None of the Miss Nevilles are ill, I hope," said Tremaine with indifference, "I don't see them here."

"Oh, no! I'm only afraid that Marshall, whom I always bring down to dress my hair, cannot set out in time, so as to be at the assizes the first day."

"That would be dreadful!" said Tremaine, and he turned away with evident contempt.

At this moment he was met by Miss Lyttleton, the lady whom we mentioned in a former chapter, as having excited in him inextinguishable dislike, from certain masculine tastes, which had made him confer upon her the title of the man woman. He started when he saw, or rather when he resolved *not* to see, her broad hand stretched out, and inviting his to a grasp, which he declined encountering. He bowed and endeavoured to pass on.

"Why, what can be the matter with the man?" cried the surprised female; "do you think I'm a bear, and would hug you to death?"

"He is not quite sure," observed Mrs. Neville, who had seen the rencontre.

"That is so like *you*," returned Miss Lyttleton;

"but really I will be obliged to you if you can tell me what has come to him, for he has cut me for the last two years most decidedly."

"He has begun, I think, to cut me too," rejoined Mrs. Neville; "but we must let spoilt children have their own way, for it is too much trouble to attempt to correct them."

"But I really used to like the fellow," continued Miss Lyttleton. "Well, I hope I shall find somebody else of my acquaintance, for I cannot do without a man to flirt with, or laugh at, and my mother has left me here with Lady Bellenden for three days;—only think what a bore!"

Then eyeing Georgina through her glass, "By the way," she proceeded, "you seem to have got a pretty young thing there with you. Do introduce me, will you?"

As this could not be refused, the ceremony was instantly performed, and while she shook, or rather twisted Georgina's slender wrist, "I assure you," she exclaimed, "I like a pretty girl, almost as well as a pretty fellow. By the way, I don't at all like those curls of your's; why don't you crop as close as I do?—Mrs. Neville, how do you like my new crop?"

At this she bent down her head to shew how entirely she had stript a poll of strong black hair, of every thing like ornament, or a possibility of being

ornamented. Mrs. Neville said, that to punish her she would put her into a cap.

" Odious!" she returned. " I hate all caps but a hunting cap. They make one look so like a woman! But I declare there's Tremaine again—I must go and plague him:" and she immediately flew off.

Mrs. Neville turning to Georgina, smiled to observe her astonishment. " You are quite struck, I perceive," said she.

" Why, I own she is at least extraordinary," answered Georgina. " May I ask more particularly who and what she is?"

" I should say," replied Mrs. Neville, " that she was one of my protegées, did she not soar so infinitely above all protection. She is certainly eccentric, but I really believe there is no harm in her." She then proceeded to inform Georgina, that Miss Lyttleton was the daughter of a good-natured country gentleman in the neighbourhood, who, with an indolent mother, had allowed her to do just as she pleased; and that she had pleased always to affect the man, instead of the woman. This, she added, had, on more occasions than one, been the means of getting her into scrapes, from which she had generally extricated herself by being the first to laugh at them, and by availing herself of a sort of privilege of saying and doing whatever it came into her head to say or do.

This little account was interrupted by the approach of Lady Gertrude; who, perceiving Mrs. Neville, came up to that lady with something like pleasure, and shaking hands with her, exclaimed, "O! I am so glad to see you here; it is really quite shocking to have no one to speak to!"

"Is this to be my friend?" said Georgina to herself.

The lady went on, "Oh! do pray let me sit by you at dinner, my dear Mrs. Neville. By the way, how did you come?—did you know this was one of my father's public days?" surveying her dress.

"Oh! don't look at me," said Mrs. Neville, "for I am merely *en voyageuse*, and if it were not for a few diamonds that my woman got at for me, I should not be fit to be seen. However, I see you've scarcely any body here."

"Oh no! nothing but parsons and parsons' daughters," said Lady Gertrude, sotto voce.

"My friend!" observed Georgina again to herself.

"How you overlook merit!" replied Mrs. Neville —"Don't you see Mr. Horton?"

"Still worse!" remarked Lady Gertrude; "an honest downright Yorkshire 'squire might do; but a 'squire whose head is turned merely because he belongs to one of the lower club-houses in St. James's Street, is quite unbearable."

"Well, then," cried Mrs. Neville, "I will now

really give you joy, for if I mistake not here come two admirers of yours."

"I protest, and so they do," said Lady Gertrude, eyeing them through her glass.

These were no less persons than the Lord St. Clair, and the still greater Beau of whom such honourable mention has been made in a former chapter. Seeing Mrs. Neville and Lady Gertrude, they instantly joined them; the Beau, upon the same principle as Lady Gertrude herself had sought Mrs. Neville, and for the rest of the interval, till dinner was announced, the group seemed quite happy, if Lady Gertrude's happiness was not a little alloyed by the attentions which St. Clair paid to his old acquaintance and relation Georgina, and by the total neglect of Tremaine. For this, however, she was amply compensated by the Beau, to whom she gave the same *carte du pays* as she had given to Mrs. Neville, and who finding from her that Georgina was the daughter of a country parson, scarcely vouchsafed to look at her: and having agreed to sit all together, and, as the Beau said, to let the natives take care of themselves, (which was thought very witty by Mrs. Neville and Lady Gertrude,) they adjourned, on a summons, to the dining-room, where about thirty persons of both sexes sat down.

CHAP. IV.

PRECEDENCY.

" You know your own degrees; sit down; at first
" And last, a hearty welcome."

SHAKSPEARE.

It was not without difficulty that the guests were arranged; since, in addition to country precedency, (a point infinitely too nice for the best heraldry to settle,) the wish of the above honourable party to sit together, threw considerable embarrassment in the way. The place of Lord St. Clair, as first in rank, decided itself, and he was seated by Lady Bellenden, at her right hand, without opposition. Mrs. Neville seated herself in the chair next to him; Mr. Beaumont was going to take Lady Bellenden's left hand; and Lady Gertrude next to him; and thus all would have been quietly and comfortably arranged. But unforeseen, though insuperable impediments arose on the part of Sir Marmaduke Crabtree, and not only of Lady Crabtree, but Lady Grojam, Lady Mayfield, and Lady Bluemantle; the three first, wives of Baronets; the last only of a Knight, but that Knight the High Sheriff himself. All these high dames had, in their way, just as high notions of their own con-

sequence as Mrs. Neville; and as the latter had no title, they were by no means disposed to yield their rank.

Sir Marmaduke began the attack by immediately seizing the Beau's chair, just as he was going to sit down. He owed it, he thought, to Yorkshire, to his own ancient Baronetcy, and to his hoped-for Peerage, not to give way to a man, whom, however well received in the very best circles in town, he looked down upon as greatly his inferior, particularly in the country, and most of all in Yorkshire.

"By your leave, Mr. Beaumont," said Sir Marmaduke, "I have sat at this lady's left hand, any time these twenty years, upon these occasions, and I hope she will not order me away from her now."

Mr. Beaumont instantly yielded, and to do him justice, with very good grace.

"If she did," added Sir Marmaduke, sitting down, and leering at his wife, as he said it, "I *must* obey, for every body knows I am under petticoat government."

Now as every body knew that Lady Crabtree had in fact what is called a very bad time of it as a wife, this was considered an exceeding good joke of Sir Marmaduke's. It was laughed at accordingly by Mr. Placid, who after attempting a seat higher up the table than he had a right to, was regularly giving way to every one who claimed a chair above him,

until he had reached the bottom; catching the joke however in its progress as it went.

Sir Marmaduke having disposed of himself, there still remained the female difficulties above mentioned; for the three Baronets' ladies, and Lady Bluemantle, all remained standing—not choosing to place themselves while Mrs. Neville was actually seated above them. All, however, agreed that Mrs. High Sheriff, though only a knight's lady, was to have the precedency.

"My dear Lady Bluemantle," cried they all in a voice, "the thing is quite decided."

"Perhaps so," said Lady Bluemantle, "but where am I to sit?" refusing the chair she was next to, and looking significantly at the seated Mrs. Neville.

Lady Bellenden appeared distressed, and said, "Mrs. High Sheriff, a thousand pardons, you are certainly in your wrong place; Gertrude, my dear, let Lady Bluemantle have your chair."

But unfortunately, this being on the left hand, was a compromise by no means agreeable to Mrs. High Sheriff, who still kept looking at Mrs. Neville. That superior lady, who had affected to be talking to Lord St. Clair, but who saw the whole contest from the first, had in fact wished to keep her seat, both because she wished to be next St. Clair, and was too proud to yield it to persons, who, though they ranked before

her in title, did not, as she knew, come near her in real consequence, and whom, in fact, she looked upon as mighty ordinary people. But perceiving that she was occasioning embarrassment to Lady Bellenden, and that she could easily turn the ill breeding of which she might be accused upon her rivals, she with admirable presence of mind started up, exclaiming, "Dear me, ladies, I have a million of pardons to beg; pray Lady Bellenden excuse me; I have quite forgot myself; I really thought I was in my own county." Then insisting upon placing Lady Bluemantle in the chair she resigned, she observed with a laugh, that titles were really now become so common, that a plain gentlewoman never could tell whereabouts she was.

Miss Lyttleton here proposed a side-table, the fun of which she said she should like of all things; adding she was sure she should prove an excellent toast-master.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Neville, "Lady Gertrude will make room for me; or what may be better still, suppose we all go to the bottom of the table; Lord Bellenden will, I hope, be glad to receive us." At these words moving downwards, she was followed by Lady Gertrude and Mr. Beaumont, who said it was an excellent plan; and having deranged the whole settlement in Lord Bellenden's neighbourhood, the

Baronet ladies having agreed upon their seniorities at the upper end, all was harmony, and the dinner commenced.

CHAP. V.

POLITE CONVERSATION.

"Our court, you know, is haunted with a refined traveller of Spain."

SHAKSPEARE.

"ADMIRABLY carried!" said Tremaine to Georgina, by whom he had seated himself about the middle of the table, after having observed the whole contest with more than usual interest. "The Empress Catherine could not have settled it better, had she condescended to squabble about such a thing."

"Pray, Sir, did you know any thing about the Empress Catherine?" asked a gentleman who sat opposite, and happened to hear him.

"Not personally," answered Tremaine, rather surprised at the abruptness of the stranger.

"I knew her, I may say intimately," replied the gentleman, "and all her ministers, generals, and ladies."

Tremaine bowed with great distance of manner; then, turning to Georgina, began to do the honours

of that part of the table, wondering who this stranger was, who was so familiarly disposed.

"I had letters," continued the stranger, not allowing Tremaine to escape, "from old Kaunitz, to whom I had been recommended by the ministry here, which gave me the greatest facilities at the court of St. Petersburgh."

"I dare say, Sir," answered Tremaine coldly.

"My first rencontre, with Prince Kaunitz," continued the gentleman with intrepid vivacity, "was remarkable—and I will relate it if you please."

"Whether I please or not, it seems," said Tremaine, in a low voice. The stranger then sending away his plate, went on thus: "Lord R. (then Mr. R.) and myself agreed to ride into Vienna; it was the first time we were there; I visited it several times afterwards, both on my return from Berlin and from Poland."

"Do you know this person?" said Tremaine to Evelyn.

"Not I," answered the Doctor, "but he seems amusing."

"Amusing!" cried Tremaine.

"Hear him," said the Doctor.

"Well," proceeded the traveller, "Lord R. (then Mr. R.) and I resolved to ride into Vienna on post-horses. Lord R. was then young, handsome, and gay, and perhaps the greatest beau of his age. He

wore red heels to his boots, and gilt spurs—had on a gold-laced riding coat and hat, a couteau de chasse by his side, and a long hunter's whip in his hand."

"That's just like the picture of my father," said Sir Marmaduke; adding in a low voice to Lady Bellenden, "who the devil is this odd gentleman?"

Lady Bellenden informed him it was Sir William Wagstaff, a great author and traveller, who had brought letters of introduction to Lord Bellenden, in his way to the North. Some fish stopped the progress of the story—which the company thought was lost; when Mr. Placid, who had been very attentive, said—"Pray, Sir, go on; what you were relating was very entertaining."

"Sir, you do me honour," resumed the stranger; and immediately addressing himself to him, continued: "well, we came in at a canter, preceded by an avant-courier, and attended by two English grooms and two French valets, all on horseback: and whom should we meet but Prince Kaunitz taking an airing in his coach and six."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Placid.

"He was struck with the cavalcade, and presuming that some great person—possibly a crowned head, or what perhaps interested him as much at least—some great ambassador,—was arriving, he put his head out of his coach window, and made us a low bow; and clasping his hands in an intreating man-

ner, exclaimed, ‘ Monsieur—oserai—je vous demander, qui est-ce qui arrive?’ My Lord R. (then Mr. R.) immediately reined up his horse, and pulling off his hat in a very chivalrous manner, with his right hand on his breast, and a low bow, replied, ‘ Monsieur, c’est moi.’ The astonished prince, overwhelmed with the liberty he had taken, shrunk back in his coach, with a long-drawn exclamation of “Ah!’——— which none of this company, I apprehend, if they have not been abroad, can appreciate.’

“ It is a delightful story,” said Mr. Placid. “ Pray, Sir, did nothing else pass?”

“ What a parasite!” observed Tremaine to Evelyn.

“ The gentleman does not think so,” answered Evelyn.

The gentleman went on—“ Why yes, we were that very evening presented to Prince Kaunitz at his assembly, and, to his surprise, he found in Lord R. the gentleman whom he had taken for a foreign ambassador.”

“ I never heard any thing more entertaining,” said Mr. Placid.

Somebody now mentioning a particular name, it immediately caught the traveller’s ear, as belonging to an author of some notoriety from a northern kingdom, who was a traveller too, but who rested

his fame upon very extensive works in history and moral science.

The stranger asked aloud if that was the man who wrote the history of ———? Now it happened that at that moment, the very identical author of that very history, who had been brought to Lord Bellenden's dinner by a neighbouring dean, was engaged with Mrs. Neville in a disquisition upon geology, from which that lady seemed very much to wish to be released. When therefore the above speech of the traveller was uttered, Lord Bellenden became anxious, least so critical a question might disturb the harmony of his table, by involving the two authors in a personal contest: and in order to prevent all danger, at least as it might arise from ignorance, he instantly interposed by observing, "I perceive, Sir William, you know that gentleman only by reputation, for I have the honour of having him close by me. I have been faulty in not presenting two eminent persons to each other—Dr. M'Ginnis, give me leave to introduce Sir William Wagstaff to you."

This good-nature on the part of Lord Bellenden met with a strange return; for our traveller, (whether from jealousy, a real fit of absence, or some infatuation,) after returning the profound bow which the Scotch Doctor made him, exclaimed, as one who was thinking aloud, "A strange rencontre! it is very

well I did not go any farther." Lord Bellenden was in consternation at this speech; particularly as he observed the Doctor red from ear to ear with resentment, and about to make a thundering reply; when the traveller, with probably greater presence of mind than strict good faith, perceiving he had got into a scrape, disarmed the Doctor in a moment by observing, "My dear Sir, I have made you a very awkward speech, but you know there are two ways of construing it—favourably and unfavourably. I will only put it to your own knowledge of good breeding, in which sense I could have meant it."

"Oh, my dear Sir," answered the mollified Doctor, bowing with most dignified humility—"I am convinced how a person of your figure could alone have meant it; and indeed, as you vary justly observe, it would have been vary awkward for your humble servant, (though it has hay-pened to me before now, turning to Lord Bellenden and Mrs. Neville,) to have heard my own works praised before my face."

This speech entirely cured the fears of the good-natured Lord Bellenden,—who, however, afterwards declared he should have desired no better entertainment than to have seen the two authors cut up each other; and Mr. Beaumont observed gravely to the Doctor, that really so great a reputation must some-

times be inconvenient; to which the Doctor modestly assented.

This little episode being over, the business of dinner went on with earnestness, and many were the praises of the venison, and turtle, the grapes, the pines, and the peaches which were demolished.

"I wish my mother would go," said Lady Gertrude, yawning; "she thinks it so civil to stay with these people."

"Why to be sure," answered Mrs. Neville; "do you think, with all her rectitude, (and to be sure nobody has more) she does not know what she is about? or your father there, good dear man! would he do all this in the county for nothing? By the bye, how old is your brother?"

"Who, Norburn? twenty—nineteen—I really don't know, and don't care—I really am so stupid, I don't know what I am about, or what I am saying."

"Forgive me, my dear, if on such an occasion you ought to know both the one and the other," replied Mrs. Neville.—"We who come in upon a popular election, where there are a great many long purses, owing to that hideous commerce, are forced to study, and therefore are able to give a lesson."

The signal so much wished for by Lady Gertrude was now given by the Countess; and the ladies retired in the same order that had been settled at

dinner; but Mrs. Neville staid behind every one, to go out arm in arm with her dear Lady Gertrude, who, as the daughter of the house, retired last. As soon as the door was closed, Lord Bellenden took the head of the table, and was followed without ceremony by Mr. Beaumont, who did not much like his quarters, now there was neither the host nor the host's daughter to enliven him.

And now Dr. M'Ginnis prepared his mighty spirit, and hoped the wished-for opportunity was come, when he might display those powers of ratiocination, and that fund of information, which he seemed peculiarly to have treasured up for occasions of this sort. And now the most accomplished of travellers revolved in his mind all his magazines of anecdote and egotism, sighing for that fortunate question, or opportune remark, which might unlock the ample store; and now Mr. Beaumont began to look round in quest of food for his favourite amusement of quizzing;—in short, the health of the King was given, the signal for general conversation was thrown out, and every man's heart beat high with expectation: save only Tremaine's, which had alone felt pleasure while he found himself near to Georgina, and which, now she was gone, gave itself up to the disgust which preyed upon it, from the folly or the vice which he attributed to every one of his neighbours,—always ex-

cepted the master of the feast, and Evelyn, to whom he clung with more than usual attachment.

But the removal of Lord Bellenden to the head of the table was rather a damper to Dr. M'Ginnis's hopes, as he by that means was deprived of his most illustrious auditor—the man, whom, being master of the house, he most wished to please: for it was a very good house,—the company assembled in it very good company, and the table which adorned it a very good table; in short, it was a house which in all respects the Doctor had no objection to visit again.

Soon, however, he was relieved; for a difference of opinion had already begun to arise at the upper end of the table, in consequence of a warm eulogy of the traveller upon the Empress Elizabeth, for abolishing capital punishments in her dominions,—accompanied by a censure, in no very measured terms, of the sanguinary nature of the English law. This was replied to by Lord Bellenden himself,—who, as a senator, and perhaps as chairman of sessions, where he so worthily presided, thought it right to defend the policy of his country.

Evelyn, who had hitherto been a silent observer, but who loved conversation, ranged himself on the side of Lord Bellenden; while Beaumont, whether he thought it not fair for two to fall upon one, or that he might be better able to draw out the ridicu-

lous, by an affected support, warmly took the part of the traveller.

The Doctor saw and heard all this with envious eyes and ears, and began to ponder his misfortune in being placed so *hors de combat*, or, what was worse, in combat with Mr. Placid, who gave no scope whatever to his dialectic powers. In this emergency, some assertion of the traveller in respect to the great King of Prussia staggered the noble host, particularly as Evelyn said it was a good argument, if the fact were true; and all he had to do was to doubt the fact, until better informed. Appeal was made to Tremaine, as having been at Berlin, but he protested the King of Prussia had been so long dead when he was there, that he could say nothing with accuracy on the subject. It was then that the Doctor's good star presided, for Lord Bellenden recollecting he had travelled many years before, and had seen the great Frederick alive, determined to appeal to him, which he accordingly did in a voice quite loud enough to be heard. The Doctor felt great pleasure at being thus appealed to; but though Lord Bellenden's language were as clear as his lungs were good, he nevertheless protested, with many apologies, that he hay-pened to be so very deef that day with a cauld, that he had not the honour of being able to make oot his lordship's quastion.

"Suppose you come among us?" said Lord Bellenden; "we can make room for you."

"Weellingly, my Lord," answered the delighted Doctor; and then with his napkin and dessert plate in his hand, he bade adieu to his more ordinary neighbours, to follow fortune in a higher circle.

The question was whether Frederick the Great had not *imitated* the example of Elizabeth.

"I suppose," said the Doctor, with a grave and wise air, as becoming one who had been chosen a referee, "ye all know he was called *Le Roi philosophe et guerrier?*"

"To be sure we do," answered the traveller, "who does not?"

"I confess I did not," said Mr. Beaumont, with great seriousness; "I should be glad to hear Dr. M'Ginnis."

"Sir, you do me great honour," returned the Doctor, bowing; "and, sir," turning to the traveller, "you will never airgu if you hurry thengs; you are too raypid by half."

"I am not arguing," replied the traveller, "I am only advancing a fact which you cannot deny; if you do, I only refer you to Baron Reisbach's account of Frederick the Great."

"Sir," rejoined the historian, "it is not I that am to be referred to any account of a man whose life

I have made it my *bee*siness to study; but the theng lies much deeper; ye are upon the nature of laws, and as I collacted where I sat, upon cay-pital punishments."

"I thought you were so deaf, you could not hear?" said Sir Marmaduke.

The Doctor looked adust, but Mr. Beaumont gravely observed, he knew from experience, that it was the nature of deafness to hear at one time and not at another.

"I thank ye sir, again," said the Doctor; "ye have explained it vary philosophically."

"But the King of Prussia," again cried the traveller, with increased eagerness.

"We are not yet ripe for him," answered the phlegmatic jurisconsult; "a mere fact will do nothing, tell ye have sattled the whole theory and nature of laws in general. I presume you have never read Ulpian or Papinian—"

"No! thank Heaven!" said the traveller, quite vexed.

"And yet no one," replied the Doctor, unmoved, "need thank Heaven for his own ignorance;" at which many of the company laughed, to the annoyance of the traveller. "Perhaps," continued the Doctor, enjoying his advantage, "ye have not canvassed the laws of the twelve tables, foonded upon those of

Solon, and sent for express from Rome to Athens. But ye possibly have heard of Draco?"

"This is quite unbearable," groaned the traveller.

"Depend upon it, he cannot contradict your fact," whispered Mr. Beaumont, encouraging him.

"When my gude Lord Bellenden and this gude company," continued the Doctor, "shall have heard the end of my airgument . . . . . ."

"I own I have not heard the beginning of it," said Lord Bellenden; to which Sir Marmaduke added, it was a damned dry argument, and desired they would push about the bottle.

"Shall we go to the ladies?" asked Tremaine, almost dead with ennui.

"They have not sent for us," said Lord Bellenden.

"My good Doctor," said Lord Bellenden, "all we want to know is, whether the King of Prussia *imitated* the example of the Empress Elizabeth, as Sir William Wagstaff says, (and I venture to deny,) in abolishing capital punishments."

"Your Lordship is parfectly corract," returned the Doctor.

"Impossible!" ejaculated the traveller, "I will shew it you in Baron Reisbach's eulogy, and it was always so held when I was at Berlin; I cannot be mistaken. O! if I had but a Reisbach!"

"I do not exactly deny or affirm any thing," replied the Doctor, not willing to hazard himself as to the fact; "but only that he did not *eemitate* Eleezabeth."

This is too much, thought Tremaine, and jumping on his legs, fairly walked through a garden door, to recover himself from a disgust no longer bearable.

Not so Mr. Beaumont, who rather enjoyed the scene. "I think your discrimination is perfectly just," cried he to Dr. M'Ginnis, "and I own I come over to you."

"I thought you would," observed the Doctor, looking at Lord Bellenden for approbation.

Lord Bellenden was however too just to accept of such doubtful assistance, and moreover not very much delighted with his auxiliary; he therefore begged him to say candidly, as far as he knew, whether Frederick did or did not enact the abolition.

"To say as far as I know upon any subject," said the historian with great dignity, "would be to say a great deal."

"Then out with it all at once," cried Sir Marmaduke, filling his glass.

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated Evelyn.

"We shall never get at the point," observed Lord Bellenden.

"I am quite satisfied," exclaimed the traveller.

"So am I," echoed Evelyn.

"I confess I am not," returned the Doctor, "for we have jumped to a conclusion in defiance of all method; which I hold to be treason against the laws of true ratiocination."

"Do you say he abolished or not?" cried the traveller, with petulance.

"He did, and he didn't," answered M'Ginnis.

"What's coming now!" exclaimed Evelyn.

"Gentlemen, I see ye are none of ye metaphyseecians," observed M'Ginnis.

"Metaphysicians or not," said Lord Bellenden, "we seem to have lost the King of Prussia, and as the ladies have sent for us, we will finish the argument some other time."

CHAP. VI.

WHICH MAY SUIT EITHER TOWN OR COUNTRY.

"Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

SHAKSPEARE.

Lady Bellenden in her drawing-room, if she had not so lively, had at least an easier task than her Lord. The three Baronets' wives, vivacious as they had been in defence of their legal rights before dinner,

sunk into dull and harmless quiescence, when those rights were no longer disturbed.

Mrs. Neville, departing from the character of humility she had imposed upon herself at dinner, received all Lady Bluemantle's advances (which were many) with disdainful coldness; and as to Lady Gertrude, it was quite sufficient that she obeyed her mother's commands by remaining in the drawing-room; to assist her in doing its honours, by endeavouring to put her guests at ease with their hostess, or with themselves, formed as she thought no part of the compact. She therefore gave herself up as before, entirely to Mrs. Neville; who, to do her justice, returned all her amenities with a most exact reciprocity of feeling. To no other female in the room, not even to Miss Lyttleton or Georgina, did she vouchsafe a single word. Nay, so strong was the friendship of the two ladies, that a large window forming a considerable recess in the room, these Exclusives removed their chairs into it, in order the better to enjoy their unexpected meeting; which seemed, they said, as if it had happened in a foreign land.

In this emergency, Miss Lyttleton, after not only gaping, but stretching two or three times, declared they were all great bores! adding that if she were at home, she would go and amuse herself in the stable.

"That would be an excellent resource," said Lady Bellenden.

"How is my Lord off for cattle?" continued Miss Lyttleton—"Miss Evelyn, are you fond of riding?"

"Very," answered Georgina.

"Do you hunt?"

"I am afraid you will despise me; I have only seen hounds throw off."

"That's something, however! Do you like going to the stables?"

"Very much—for I have a favourite little horse."

"Why, I declare, my dear creature, you have some soul in you. I could almost kiss you."

The two ladies in the recess looked round at this, and smiled at one another with ineffable superiority; but the conversation again languished, until Miss Lyttleton, turning to a Miss Carysfort, who sat near, asked her to enliven them with a little scandal.

Now let none of our readers imagine that this question was put merely because the said Miss Carysfort was an old maid. Forbid it all the veneration I entertain for that sacred, and happy, because independent character: that is to say, if those to whom it belongs be rich. If poor, they must do as other poor devils do; fawn, and agree with, and traduce and invent, just as those who feed them please—but not the more (I still assert) because they

are old maids, than if they were wives or widows. No; if at all at their ease, they are more at their ease than others; and are infinitely more courted, (particularly if they have not made their wills,) than the best wife and mother on earth. The cares of the world press light upon them; they have no anxiety about the health, character, or fortune of a tribe of children, the humour in which a husband may come home, or the continuance of their empire over his affections; they have nobody's taste to consult, overcome, or defer to; nor that sad source of altercation, the questions how they shall pass the summer in the country—or how live, or dress, or amuse themselves in town. From all this they are delivered. If they are sick, a cloud of nephews and nieces present themselves hourly at their doors, to inquire after their health; if well, the said nephews and nieces all rejoice. Meantime they generally have some decent old maid like themselves, half companion, half servant, always at their call at home, on whom they may vent all their little vexations, so as to appear in ever smiling good-humour abroad.

You describe them so well, (I think I hear the reader say,) that you must certainly be one of the tribe yourself!

Of that, dear reader, I cannot satisfy thee; only if I am, I hope it is one of the happy sort I have been describing: for the blessings I have set before

thee are not to be purchased without price. There is a requisite for this perfect enjoyment, not easily obtained, and often when supposed to be obtained, vibrating in a doubtful state between hope and fear; nay sometimes, after being apparently within our grasp, thrown voluntarily away, as it should seem from very wantonness. Yet this requisite is very simple, with all its difficulties. It is merely and solely, that the old maid should have fairly, soberly, deliberately, and bona fide, *given the matter up.* It is inconceivable, from not understanding this, to how many misrepresentations, and ignorant calumnies, the poor old maid is subject. For observe, I talk of a real, pure, and unsophisticated old maid: none of your doubtful characters, who are still hesitating and hankering, and put out of their straight line, by every chance attention they meet: with whom one squeeze of the hand, (unexpected as it may be,) is sure to demolish a six months' resolution. Woe to all such for their happiness is not arrived, and they drag on a miserable, uncertain, between hawk and buzzard existence, which subjects them like the poor bat in the fable, that was neither bird nor beast, to a thousand affronts. But once fairly fixed in a determinate capacity, with a good well-engraved *Mrs.* on their cards, their independence continues for the rest of their lives, and their happiness is complete!

But there is no rule, no operation of nature, by

which the change may be both effected and discovered? When a horse is aged, it is known by his teeth; a cow by her horns; birds moult their feathers, and snakes cast their skins at given times. Surely if Buffon had considered this matter. . . . .

I tell you, Madam, there is no criterion!—I have studied the subject, and you may rest assured there is nothing so indeterminate. It is in fact inconceivable how the signs vary and fluctuate, and fade, and glimmer again—how differently, in point of time, the different species of this extraordinary animal exhibit the decisive marks of their crisis. In some auspicious subjects, I have known it to take place at forty, and they have continued ever afterwards to a happy old age, in constant respectability and good-humour. In others the symptoms have appeared and disappeared, and varied, so as to puzzle the most sagacious observer, from forty to sixty. And I have even known the phænomena fluctuate in some instances till near seventy, before the commotion has thoroughly subsided.

Now, whether in Miss Carysfort's instance these phænomena had been protracted in an unusual degree; that is, whether at sixty, rebellion still continued; in other words, whether she had not *given the matter up;* or whether the devil has any share in colouring our tempers at our births; it is certain that long before any of the symptoms I have been describ-

ing began to appear, I may say even in her youth, this lady was remarkable for that superiority of prudence and good conduct, which could never endure any thing in others that was less correct than her own standard. It was hence that, when either public or private misfortunes were most frequent, she was most abroad! and during a state of doubt as to the reputation of any of her friends, so eager was she to clear the innocence of the unhappy parties by all proper inquiries and communications, that it was observed her carriage and horses never had so little rest as upon such occasions.

Such was the correct and amiable being to whom, in the absence of other amusement, Miss Lyttleton directed the important request, to enliven them with a little scandal.

It was in vain the good Lady Bellenden protested against the effects of such a mode of enlivening, directed to such a source. "Why, my dear madam," replied Miss Lyttleton, "what can we possibly do? Lady Gertrude there, though she is your daughter, and I am your guest, does not think me fit to speak to; and Mrs. Neville never talks till the gentlemen come up; or if she does, about nothing but laces, which I don't understand; or what she is doing in Lancashire, which I don't care a whistle about."

Both the exclusives turned their heads round at this, and exchanged smiles, and Mrs. Neville

shrugged up her shoulders; but both remained otherwise unmoved.

"You have a companion near you," said Lady Bellenden, looking at Georgina, "who perhaps might enliven you, were you to try."

"Oh dear no; I am told she is very accomplished, which I am not: and besides is a great deal too good: for she would not let me abuse that wretch Tremaine just now; and when I asked her whether she did not like talking of the fellows, she said no! which I believe was a great lie; and therefore I say again, Miss Carysfort, do give us a little scandal."

CHAP. VII.

A STORY.

"A very honest woman, but something given to lie, which
"Woman should not do, but in the way of honesty."

SHAKSPEARE.

Miss Carysfort protested with an assumed laugh, that she did not know why she applied to her for scandal, as she made it a rule never to talk of any thing till she had ascertained its truth; and that

while so many unhappy things were passing in the world, there was no occasion, she thought, for what was called scandal.

Lady Bellenden asked with some interest whether she alluded to any thing particular; in which the good Countess verified a remark that has sometimes been made, that so prone are even the best and wisest natures to busy themselves with the history of other people, that they listen to the relation in spite of even predetermined caution against the relator. Had Lady Bellenden for a single moment recollected her own opinions of Miss Carysfort,—whom, from her sense of the dangerous character of a mere gossip, much more of an ill-natured one, she never treated as of any authority,—she would not have given opportunity to her tongue, by the question. But the question was out, and necessarily answered.

"I am unwilling to say any thing," said Miss Carysfort, "even though all the world is full of it, that concerns so near a friend of Miss Lyttleton's as Mrs. C.———."

"Dear me, what of her?" asked Miss Lyttleton; "why I had a letter from her this morning."

The intimation of Miss Carysfort roused the attention of all the ladies, and among them of Mrs. Neville herself, who was also particularly acquainted with Mrs. C———; a sort of friendship, or rather civil intercourse, existing between them; and she

actually turned from the fair Gertrude to listen. But the fair Gertrude retained all her *sang froid*, and appeared totally unmoved about a person, whom she had met indeed in society, but not in that society where alone she thought it of consequence to meet any body.

"You amaze me," cried Miss Lyttleton; "do pray say what has happened?"

"Only what happens too often," replied Miss Carysfort, "in other families besides Mrs. C——'s; a discovery which has already ended in a separation, and must in a divorce!"

"Nay, that's quite impossible," said Miss Lyttleton, "for her letter of this morning is dated from Dalemain, where Mr. C——— is at home with her."

"I wish it may be so," replied Miss Carysfort.

Lady Bellenden immediately pronounced that the proof was demonstrative, and that Miss Carysfort must have been misinformed.

"I seldom am," returned that lady, "and at any rate have had the story with so many particulars, there must be something in it."

"Oh! do pray let us have it," cried Lyttleton—"for as I am sure it is all a wicked lie, it will be such fun to tell it again to Mrs. C———."

"Had we not better drop it?" said Lady Bellenden.

"Oh! not for the world," exclaimed Miss Lyttleton—"do pray go on."

Miss Carysfort, however, rather drew back, till all the ladies requesting to hear the report, and all adding they should entirely disbelieve it, she upon that condition (which she said would render it perfectly harmless) related her news, with all its accompanying circumstances.

It was a round unvarnished tale, amounting to neither more nor less than this—that Mr. C———— having returned unexpectedly in the night from Newmarket,—where it was supposed he was to have remained some days—went softly to his chamber: that to his astonishment he found on his own chair a leathern pair of those parts of dress which delicacy, or indelicacy (I know not which) always forbids us to name, and which properly belong to the male sex; that alarmed at this, he looked farther, and by the light of the lamp, beheld a head on his pillow which certainly he thought had no business there: that he did not make out to whom it belonged, but that it was a short cropt head without a nightcap; finally, that both Mrs. C——— and her partner were locked in sleep.

"And what happened?" cried Miss Lyttleton, struggling with the greatest difficulty against a burst of laughter.

"Why Mr. C.———'s first impulse," said Miss

Carysfort, " was to use his pistols; but he contented himself with seizing a horsewhip he had in the room, and laid it most unmercifully both on Mrs. C——— and her paramour, till the servants, alarmed at their cries, rescued them."

Here Miss Lyttleton could no longer restrain herself, and almost falling on the floor in a convulsion of laughter, exclaimed, " Oh! my dear Cary, my dear Lady Bellenden—never in this world was any thing so good!—my poor friend! and my poor self to be so horsewhipt!—what must I do to that savage C———? The whipping was mine, the cropt head was mine, and the culottes were mine;—I went unexpectedly to stay all night, and Mrs. C——— being alone, slept with her; I shall absolutely die of the conceit."

Here fits of laughter stopt her, and she could not proceed. The laughter indeed was catching, for none of the ladies could any longer resist, save only the Exclusive in the window, (who, however, was seen to smile) and Miss Carysfort herself, who seeemed rather disconcerted at the total overthrow of her story, which she endeavoured indeed to set up again, by observing that it was at least strange, if not incredible, that a young lady should wear culottes, and those culottes buckskins—for as to the fact of their being found as she had described, she would pledge her existence for its truth.

Miss Lyttleton assured her that in this she was perfectly correct, and that it was no secret in the Dalemain Hunt, to which she belonged; adding that she never took a long journey on horseback, as she had on the day in question, without the comfort of that most useful apparatus.

After the ridicule had a little subsided, Lady Bellenden observed gravely, that it was almost too bad for laughter; for that it was owing solely to the fortunate circumstance of Miss Lyttleton's being her guest at the same time with Miss Carysfort, that the reputation of a very worthy woman had not been blasted.

The gentlemen now all came flocking in, and Mr. Beaumont begged to be informed of the cause of the peals they had heard, even in the dining-room.

"You must ask Miss Lyttleton," answered Lady Gertrude; "I am sure you cannot tax me with any thing so hoydenish."

"And yet I have seen you laugh, Lady Gertrude."

"In other company then," replied the lady.

Miss Lyttleton had now made all the gentlemen acquainted with what she emphatically called *her* anecdote, and was relating to Evelyn the danger she had been in of being horsewhipt.

"This comes," observed the Doctor gravely, "of women's wearing the breeches;" a remark not at all

agreeable to Mr. Placid, who conceiving it levelled at him, instantly turned away.

Lady Gertrude now stretching her fair neck far (very far for her) out of the window in which she had remained hitherto without moving, Miss Lyttleton,—who not worshipping at the shrine of the exclusives, did not, to use her own language, care a farthing for them,—came up to her, and said she was glad she had at last found something worth looking at.

"Pray what can it be, my dear?" said Miss Lyttleton, with a familiarity which certainly gave no pleasure to the dignified lady to whom it was addressed. She indeed seemed struck with horror at the address itself, and immediately prepared to change her seat.

"Oh! don't trouble yourself," continued her careless companion, "I assure you though I bark, I don't bite, and as it shocks you so much, I will even promise not to call you my dear again. Nay, pray don't move, I am not going to stay; I only wanted to see what could possibly have the honour of being looked at so earnestly;—well! I declare if there is not that wretch Tremaine, walking by himself! he has surely been under the window, all the time you have been in it. Oh! oh! now the secret's out."

Lady Gertrude's countenance began absolutely to

show some emotion, and she even observed with displeasure, that to say so, was at least a liberty she would not have taken with Miss Lyttleton.

Miss Lyttleton replied that she saw no liberty in it, as it was a mere observation on a fact.

Lady Gertrude said she might be wrong as to her fact.

"Well, perhaps I am, for I observed him to-day, and he cut you cruelly."

Lady Gertrude looked still more horrified—as the Amazon afterwards boastingly said,—yet she continued tauntingly, "well now, I wonder what can make him run away from your ladyship! Such a person as me I know he hates, and with some reason, for I once forgot myself so far as to lay my whip across his high mightiness's shoulders. But such a person as your ladyship would suit him to a T;—indeed, I think you are quite formed for one another."

At that moment, Tremaine, who had endeavoured to walk off his disgusts in the cool of the evening, had re-entered the drawing-room, so as to receive these last words in his ear. Lady Gertrude had sense enough to feel their satire, and to perceive that the satire was intended—but as she also knew that satire was not her *forte*, she had the prudence not to reply: but with piteous looks, after searching for

Mrs. Neville in vain, besought the protection of Mr. Beaumont. This, (though he had secretly enjoyed the rencontre,) to a lady of her quality he could not refuse, and therefore endeavoured to create a diversion in her favour, by engaging the Amazon himself.

"You do Mr. Tremaine a great deal of honour," said he, looking at him; "I wish he but knew how high he stands in your opinion."

"Perhaps he would not thank me," answered the lady, (perceiving, but not minding Tremaine) "nor you either, indeed—for I think you both very much alike:" (Mr. Beaumont bowed,) "for both of you," continued Miss Lyttleton, "are dandies, only a little old; and as Lady Gertrude here is a dandy of the first order, I think either of you would do for her."

Tremaine reddened with the deepest disgust; but the huntress went on—"All three indeed are very refined, and very solemn, and very exclusive, and all that; and though I declare, (looking closer at Mr. Beaumont,) you are grown quite bald, (dear me! only see how bald!) I am sure Lady Gertrude quite prefers you to all the company—particularly as Mr. Tremaine has cut her."

The awkward looks of both the male and the female exclusives, at this speech, were diverting to the bye-standers, and even to Evelyn and Georgina: though the latter, upon a distant sopha, could but

just make it out. She however, though all idea of the fulfilment of Lady Bellenden's wish had been long dispelled, had natural good-breeding enough to refrain from even looking at Lady Gertrude, much more from shewing the impression which this rattle had made upon her.

Lady Gertrude had nothing left for it but to change her place, and seek a new companion; and a seat on Georgina's sopha being vacant, she took refuge there, followed by Beaumont.

"There goes refinement, both male and female," cried Miss Lyttleton aloud; "I declare I have put it quite to flight; I never enjoyed drawing a badger more. Well now! is it not strange that people place their happiness in giving themselves airs, when it always requires the consent of others to let them, and if one does not chuse it, they never can succeed."

"More in that than at first sight appears," said Evelyn.*

* Were it possible to suspect the Amazon of reading Lord Clarendon's History, we should think she had had her eye on the following passage:—

"Lord Falkland used to say that, for keeping of state, there "must go two to it; for let the proudest or most formal man re- "solve to keep what distance he will towards others, a bold and "confident man instantly demolishes that whole machine, and "gets within him, and even obliges him to his own laws of con- "versation."

" For heaven's sake let us go," cried Tremaine.

" Your carriage is not ready," answered Evelyn with most provoking patience.

Mr. Horton now crossing the Amazon, she immediately exclaimed, " Here comes another piece of refinement in his way !"

Mr. Horton looked alarmed. " Only a little second-hand," added the lady.

Mr. Horton looked sulky. " Nay, don't be angry," proceeded she, " for I protest you are solemn enough, and look wise enough for Mr. Tremaine, and are quite self-sufficient enough for a dandy yourself !"

" This is insupportable !" cried Tremaine to Evelyn—" I implore you to come away."

" Let us see how solemnity makes it out against giddy-brain," answered his friend.

Solemnity thought it most prudent to prepare for retreat,—observing with as much humility as he could infuse into his manner, that he never pretended to dispute with ladies.

" There you are right, my good fellow," replied Miss Lyttleton; " for, depend upon it, they would beat you."

Mr. Horton only answered with a would-be contemptuous, and really silly smile, and turned to avoid her.

" I should like, however," continued she, pur-

suing him, " to hear how you make it out with gentlemen; it must be vastly edifying. Suppose you were to begin, now, with your brother dandy there, (looking at Mr. Beaumont), or Mr. Tremaine; I think they are exactly suited to meet you."

Had the lady studied the whole range of ill-nature, (which however was not her intention,) she could not have hit harder than she did upon this occasion; for Mr. Horton was a person with whom it flattered neither of the gentlemen to be compared. He was a man of large stature, and heavy, ungraceful limbs; with what is called a bull head, designed as it should seem by nature for that of a downright English yeoman; but being born to a respectable fortune, he affected the *élégant* among his brother squires; more eminent, however, in the club-house in St. James's Street, or the subscription room at York, than for knowledge in the stable or activity in the field. At the one place when in town, and at the other when in the country, he was to be seen the whole day long, concealing his dearth of ideas under a most impervious solemnity of countenance. This latter has been known to have exhibited itself for three hours together at the window at St. James's Street, in the apparent occupation of observing the passengers that flitted before it; and, indeed, as the eyes were open the whole time, there seemed to be

no unreasonable foundation for supposing the contrary.

The first object of this gentleman's ambition was to be a member of White's—in which he had failed; and the second was to imitate Mr. Beaumont,—in which he certainly had not succeeded: and as Mr. Beaumont felt his reputation cruelly invaded, even by the attempt of such a person to imitate him, and Tremaine looked down upon him for his total want of cultivation, this comparison between them by the Amazon, made a deep incision in the pride of both.

"Come," said the lady, "why don't you begin? I assure you it will do you a great deal of good, and bring you into fashion."

"*Bring* me into fashion!" exclaimed Horton, with a mortified smile.

"Yes! Mr. Beaumont brings any body into fashion he pleases; only they say he's going a little out of fashion himself."

Here Mr. Beaumont, who was not so absorbed with Lady Gertrude as to have escaped the conversation, was observed for the first time in his life to look actually disconcerted.

"Giddy-brain against the field!" said Evelyn to Tremaine.

To the latter gentleman the storm seemed now

coming round. "Pray, Mr. Tremaine," said the lady, "may I ask how you like your retirement?"

"Far better, Madam," replied he, "than bad company."

"Oh! your most obedient," returned the lady; "that, I see, was levelled at me;" and perceiving Lady Gertrude looked pleased, she went on—"I'm glad to have given you an opportunity of restoring yourself by it to my Lady Gertrude's good graces.—To say truth, you have not been even commonly civil to her, though she is at home;—though indeed I may be wrong, for as you are both of you exclusives, who are above all common comprehension, you may have been very attentive to one another for all that."

Lady Gertrude coloured, and Tremaine bowing with great dryness asked her if she had any more commands for him.

"None in particular," she replied; "only if you will help Miss Carysfort to make out why you cut Lady Gertrude and Mrs. Neville before dinner—you, who used to be so intimate with them both—you will relieve that good lady from considerable anxiety. She has been talking about it ever since."

"Talking about it!" cried Tremaine, with evident disgust.

"Yes! she will have it that either Lady Gertrude

or Miss Neville refused you, or that you refused them—she does not know which—before you went out of town; and that that was the reason you shut yourself up. Now, I follow the old maxim, and never believe above half what the world says; so I think it can only have been one of the two ladies mentioned. But now you are both here, it is quite convenient, and you will make Miss Carysfort quite happy, I'm sure, if you'll tell her; she'll be delighted at such an opportunity of getting at it from authority."

The effrontery of this speech seemed to affect both the parties concerned. Lady Gertrude coloured deep red—then turned white—and gave evident signs of resentment. For want of something else, however, she fell to pulling a rose from her bosom, and tore it all to pieces; while Tremaine, who hated Miss Carysfort's mischievous meddling, so as to shudder at her very name, shewed palpable marks of alarm, as well as of anger, from which he was not relieved even by the secession of his persecutrix; who went only, as she said, to bring Miss Carysfort to him.

The Lady Gertrude did not feel much happier. All exclusive as she was, having taken refuge with Georgina, she could not help condescending to notice her with a few words. Indeed it was necessary to relieve herself, and divert the attention of others from

the effects of the Amazon's attack, by appearing engaged.

"What an odious, bold, impudent person!" said Lady Gertrude—"don't you think so, Miss Evelyn?"

"I scarcely know her," answered Georgina, "but she seems to have great spirits."

"Horribly great, indeed," returned Lady Gertrude; "and I hate spirits—they are so vulgar."

"Yet they seem natural in her," replied Georgina.

"Oh dear, yes! but not the less vulgar on that account." Then feeling a little relieved at her absence, she added—"My aunt, the Duchess, says, there is nothing marks the difference between a real gentlewoman and a common person so much as what are called spirits; and I am sure if she were to see this person, she would only be confirmed in her opinion."

"Country girls, perhaps, think themselves privileged," said Georgina.

"Girl, do you call her!" observed her companion; "why she is thirty at least."

"And the men call her Jack," added Mr. Beaumont.

"Yet Mrs. Neville," remarked Georgina, "thinks there is no harm in her."

"That is very extraordinary," said Lady Ger-

trude, " for she always speaks of her to me with the utmost contempt."

Georgina, who was the most single-hearted creature alive, wondered at this; not adverting to the possibility of even a very great lady's accommodating herself to the tone of any companion she might wish to please; and not aware, that although Mrs. Neville revelled in wealth, yet she was still very far removed from that situation among the *haute noblesse*, that enviable point at the very head of fashion, which she affected, and which it was her fondest ambition to reach. Now Lady Gertrude, had she been even more negative in character than she was, yet, from her father's rank, and still more from the reflected splendour of the Duchess her aunt, was always a person of the very first *monde;* and from being an acknowledged exclusive, the mere appearance of her intimacy, irradiated with honour all to whom such a thing was of consequence: I say appearance, because for the reality, few, and least of all Mrs. Neville, cared in the smallest degree. All this, however, may serve to explain the different modes, both of talking and acting towards Miss Lyttleton and Georgina, which belonged to Mrs. Neville, when Lady Gertrude was or was not present. In point of fact, this distinguished lady had too much character herself to be a genuine exclusive, and only put it on when it suited the object of ambition

immediately before her: for various were her objects, and she could fly from one to the other with a versatility and talent which shewed her made for greater things, and only wanting the ingredients of sincerity and goodness, to render her a very powerful woman.

CHAP. VIII.

MANAGEMENT.

" Will you have me, Lady?
" No, my Lord, unless I might have another for working days;
" your Grace is too costly to wear every day."

SHAKSPEARE.

This ability in every thing that engaged her attention, public or private, plunged Mrs. Neville in perpetual business; and whether the management of an estate, or the management of an election, the getting off a house, or the getting off a daughter, was concerned, her industry, vigilance, and powers of acting were first-rate. As she had several daughters, the latter subject had begun to be a very serious concern to her; especially as she had been known to say, that *management* only was required to make any two persons marry as their friends might chuse.

From her mode of setting about this herself, we might have suspected her taking the hint from the stratagem which brought Benedict and Beatrice together, and of thinking with Hero and Ursula,

> " Of this matter
> " Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
> " That only wounds by hearsay."

But this supposition one thing forbade; for Mrs. Neville was personally much too occupied with the world itself to study it in Shakspeare.

Be this as it may, there was more foundation for what the Lyttleton had blurted out upon the surmise of Miss Carysfort, than usually belonged to Miss Carysfort's surmises;—for although Tremaine had not offered himself to Miss Neville, she had been offered to him, and that without either party knowing any thing about the matter. If any young woman of spirit and condition think this impossible, let her only examine the world a little farther than its outside, and she may find the thing not only perfectly feasible, but of every-day practice. Possibly she may discover, that, without knowing it, it may even have been her own case, and that while mamma has appeared occupied with her cards, and has left her seemingly to herself, she has been fairly brought to market, and bought or rejected as fortune decided.

What manœuvring has not sometimes taken place (not by the poor honest girl, but) by the more wary mamma, that the two parties should sit by one another, dance with one another, and say pretty things of one another, so as eventually to think well of one another; and yet all appear the most unpremeditated, natural thing in the world!

Just so was it for the best part of a whole spring, between Tremaine and the eldest Miss Neville, under the guidance of Miss Neville's mamma. It was at court that Tremaine was struck to the full extent of whatever impression was made; for certainly on acquaintance it never became deeper. Very handsome features, and a very graceful courtesy, caught his eye, and a compliment upon her manner and countenance by the Queen (herself an admirable judge) to the delighted mother, caught his ear. He dined that day at Neville House. In the evening there was a private concert, and Tremaine pronounced Miss Neville's finger to be, as it was, one of the best in London. The attentions of Tremaine never went farther—but they went quite far enough for Mrs. Neville, aided by the before-mentioned talent of *management*, to found upon them very strong hopes of a great *establishment* for her daughter.

This word establishment is of infinitely more force in the English language, than perhaps its dictionaries are aware of. Its importance is of such a nature,

and brought so home to the feelings of the parent as well as of the child, that it is inconceivable what a number of little moral duties, and points of delicacy, are swallowed up and lost in its contemplation. It is indeed no where to be found in the Gospel; but, like the great virtue there panegyrized, it seems to cover a multitude of sins.

So Mrs. Neville thought when she bent the force of her genius to bring establishment about, in favour of her daughter, at the expense of Tremaine. She knew there would be difficulties on both sides, the first of which was a difference in respect of age; but this, with a daughter of her bringing up, she knew also would weigh little in comparison with the beautiful houses, equipages, clothes, and pin-money, which the gentleman could bestow.

Strange to say, the chief difficulty was with the gentleman himself,—who often talked of the folly, not to say immorality, of very unequal matches of this sort. To remedy this, Mrs. Neville, with no view to any particular alliance, keeping it indeed religiously out of sight, and as if quite accidentally, would gravely debate the matter with him, and prove theoretically, how much greater chance for happiness there was when a young girl gave herself to the guidance and protection of a man who knew the world, was beyond the heyday of passion, and

who would therefore look for all his pleasures at home, than with a youth, perhaps the sport of every whim, likely to change in his feelings, to neglect, perhaps abandon his wife. On such occasions Mrs. Neville, after moralizing very prettily, would support theory by example, and would bring out, carelessly, as if just recollecting it, and perhaps after having mentioned a match or two of unequal ages between others: "Now there are my daughters —particularly Miss Neville; it is extraordinary, young as they are, how they see things as I do. I absolutely believe, nay I am quite sure of it, that, had I never endeavoured to lead them on this subject, so important to a mother, their own innate taste would induce them to prefer men full twenty years older than themselves: they say they are so much more agreeable, so much less self-sufficient." ——And then this skilful lady, after well-using the tact of which she was mistress. would add, "indeed, to own the truth to you, Mr. Tremaine, though it is a matter of too much delicacy even to glance at, if it were not for our very old acquaintance, I should not wish, with my daughter's feelings, and after what I have actually heard her say of *you* (not to me, but to her companions, young people like herself), I should not, I say—wish—that is, it is just possible it might be not quite so prudent"——and here she would

stop, in so pretty a confusion, that her daughter herself, avowing her sentiments, could scarcely have carried it better.

Notwithstanding the very old acquaintance alluded to, Tremaine in fact knew very little of the lady making the allusion, more than that she was a very great lady, with a very fine countenance, and an immense fortune. She passed much of her time in the world, yet seemed to give all her attention to the direction of a large family, and all without the least stain upon her virtue. He therefore felt pleased and flattered by this sort of confidence, and being himself open as day, had not, with all his disgusts, the least suspicion that Mrs. Neville was angling for him in favour of her daughter, as Hero, in the passage above adverted to, angled for Beatrice in favour of Benedict. He would therefore reply, as perhaps the lady wished; and according as he replied, she would inform him more particularly of what Miss Neville had said; how she had praised his fine air, his manners, his conversation, and had even sometimes added she would prefer dancing with him to the youngest man in the room.

Wiser, and even older men than Tremaine, have been caught with such latent, such well-managed flattery—and the spell was wound up when this Urganda added, as she sometimes would (if, after consulting the tact that has been mentioned, she

found she was safe), " In short, my dear Sir, though I should grieve to see less of you in a house which you are pleased to say is agreeable to your taste, and much as I should shudder to compromise my daughter's delicacy, yet I am sure you will allow for a parent's anxiety, and not expose me when I say, that it perhaps would be best for the happiness of both parties, if you saw less of Miss Neville than you do;—of her's, for the reasons I have with such unaccountable boldness ventured to mention; of your's, in order to spare a man of honour the pain of thinking he had even unintentionally made an innocent young person unhappy."

Then protesting she was surprised at her own courage in going so far, and that he was the only man alive with whom she could be thus explicit, she would break up the conference; and if, upon his attempting to make explanations, she found they were not likely to be as precise as she wished, she would say with a laughing air of generosity, " Nay, I interdict all sudden resolutions;—with your notions, it cannot be: my confidence has been drawn from me solely by a sense of your honour, and I must myself take care that to that honour no improper sacrifice on your part is offered."

It required all, and more than all Tremaine's experience in the world, to be indifferent to a mother and daughter who thought so favourably of him. He

did not exactly say with Benedict, "Love me! why it must be requited," and "the world must be peopled;" but he began to take himself seriously to task. "If," said he, "this good mother, confiding in my honour, commits her delicacy so far, shall I not do wrong if I continue these visits?" On the other hand, is not marriage the natural and honourable state of man? Ought I to retire without ascertaining whether I may not myself love?" To this, however, he added another very important question, whether he had not, all his life, been disappointed whenever he came to this point of self-examination?

In truth, the old fault so often mentioned, the natural fastidiousness, not to say waywardness of Tremaine, having been his enemy through life in lighter things, could not fail to influence his fate on this most important part of a man's conduct. With a heart originally warm, liberal, and tender too, his disposition towards marriage was not merely natural, but a principle. Yet he had reached an age not far off forty, without even an engagement. A close self-examination, therefore, in regard to Miss Neville, became absolutely necessary to this man of honour as well as of refinement; and the result was, that he resolved not to discontinue his visits, but strictly to scrutinize her conduct, and his own heart.

All this while, the poor girl was totally unconscious of what was passing; and though her mother

had acquainted her how struck Tremaine had been with her grace and *retenue* at court, she could not make out why, according to mamma's directions, the moment he appeared, all her spirits, of which she had a great exuberance, were to be repressed, and why at eighteen she was to assume the manners of a woman of thirty.

This could not long be concealed, and Tremaine began to shudder, when dancing with her at a very select ball, she not only gave the Highland fling with something very like violence, but actually turned both himself and others in the dance, two or three times oftener than the dance required.

The very little inclination of Tremaine, not even amounting to *penchant*, and excited solely by the appeal made by the mother to his feelings, began to give way. It is impossible, said he to himself, that this girl can prefer a man twenty years beyond her in age; there must be some mistake. In this frame of mind, calling suddenly at Neville House when mamma was out, he found her at high romps with her sister and a cousin, a young Cantab, little more than her own age.

The dreadful sounds of "Tom, be quiet," alarmed him on the stairs, and his fear was completed when, entering the drawing-room, he found his Sophonisba heated with play, holding up the fragments of Tom's cravat in noisy triumph, while her own dress ex-

hibited indubitable signs that the familiarity of cousins had gone as far as it legitimately might.

The consequence was, that though too just to accuse a young person of the faults of her mother, he viewed the mother herself with interminable disgust; and seeing at once the reality of her character, all intimacy ceased.

CHAP. IX.

FEMALE REFINEMENT.

"Octavia is of a cold and still conversation."
"She shews a body rather than a life."

SHAKSPEARE.

And now for the fair Gertrude! Was that surmise of the Carysfort also founded? Strange to say, more so than at first sight appeared. For though no two creatures were less alike than Lady Bellenden and Mrs. Neville, or than the fair beings whom they own as daughters, the attention of Mr. Tremaine had been excited by the dignified exclusive, in at least as great a degree as by the playful Neville.

Lest the reader however should imagine that Mr. Tremaine was a mere man of whim, and endowed

with neither penetration nor consistency, let us apprise him, as we ought, that he was honest, and true to his tastes. He had no objection to, or perhaps he even required, a liveliness of character to charm him, but he required still more *à fond;* a dignity, and even gravity of character, in all things where principle or feeling was concerned. If his interest about Miss Neville (whatever it was) seem to contradict this, let it be recollected that she had been misrepresented to him, and that he soon discovered his mistake: whereas the Lady Gertrude awed the sense in all the pride and power of a retired and lofty manner, which, even if not all her own, seemed to be so naturally inherited from her aunt, (who was the very queen of correctness as well as fashion,) that the sceptre of the Duchess, by the easiest of all transitions, appeared to devolve as of course, upon the imitative niece. When Tremaine therefore first saw her, he was inclined to approve, because all he lived with and most respected approved also. He however knew nothing of her real character, and he was checked at first, fully as much by his feeling in regard to their disparity of years, as his uncertainty of the feeling of the family on their disparity of rank.

The latter fear was soon set at rest; for independent of the plain character of Lord Bellenden, and the high antiquity of his own family,—in which there had been titles long before Lord Bellenden's was

ennobled,—the attentions of the Duchess convinced him that one of her own daughters, much more her niece, would not be thought too good for a gentleman, who though a commoner, was of ancient and even noble descent, was most fashionably received, and was master of twenty thousand a year.

The beautiful and prudent Gertrude seemed to be of the same opinion, and intimated it by all the means to which an exclusive could condescend; for not only she was always unbent when he addressed her, but she shewed a marked pleasure when he did so—allowed him to present his arm at the Opera when no other commoner could obtain that favour, and pronounced him such supreme *bon ton*, that at Almack's, notwithstanding his disinclination to dancing, he was often forced into her service, spite of that disinclination.

She went even farther, for she praised his political conduct, wondered he did not speak oftener in Parliament, and was several times known to have said, in reality, in regard to disparity of age, that which in the instance of the poor Neville had been only said *for* her.

All this from a finished exclusive! How many men have been caught with baits of less price! In truth, the Lady Gertrude, though she viewed establishment as seriously as her aunt would have her,

was in this instance as sincere in respect to love itself, as her powers of loving would let her.

Cannot then an exclusive love?—Yes! in the *second* instance—but in the first, no one but herself: and just so far could the Lady Gertrude have loved Tremaine, if Tremaine had loved the Lady Gertrude.

And why did he not? Simply because, with an imposing appearance of dignity, her's was of that nature to depend entirely upon the will and pleasure of others. In truth it was factitious, and had nothing real about it. If homage were offered, well; if refused, real dignity never could be shewn, for it did not exist. Thus, though there was always so much propriety of behaviour in her, that impropriety seemed impossible, yet Nature, in making her, seemed to have forgotten one of her usual gifts on those occasions, and sent her into the world without a heart. Lastly, with a certain degree of merit, amounting to respectability, in all the modern accomplishments, as they are called,—that is to say, in music, dancing, painting, fancy work, and fillagree work, and to a certain degree in the languages in fashion,—the Lady Gertrude was at best but superficial, and fell sometimes into errors, which discovered not merely a want of feeling, but the very grossest ignorance.

In short, had the Lady Gertrude lived when Pope

wrote his satire on women, it might have been said that it was from her outline he filled his canvass with the well-known portrait of Chloe.

" Yet Chloe sure was form'd without a spot,
" Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot.
" With every pleasing, every prudent part,
" Say, what can Chloe want?—She wants a heart.
" She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought,
" But never, never reach'd one generous thought.
" Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
" Content to dwell in decencies for ever.
" So very reasonable, so unmoved,
" As never yet to love—or to be loved."

Was this a wife for Tremaine? With all his defects (and we have shewn that he had many), we hope not.

The rest of this historiette is short—for it was not possible for a person, in reality so little gifted, long to disguise that reality to the fault-finding eye of such an *attentif* (for observe, reader, we do not call him lover,) as our man of refinement.

His first alarm was for her heart, at a tragedy, and began by his observing her not merely unmoved, but in full flirtation with Mr. Beaumont, while

" Belvidera poured her soul in love."

Willing to attribute this merely to accident, he called upon her the next day, and turned the discourse upon the tragic poets;—Shakspeare, Otway,

Corneille, Racine. He was delighted to find she knew something of most, and eagerly asked which she preferred?——To his astonishment she answered that she did not see much difference. This apathy, or rather ignorance, shocked him, and he staid away a week.

Meeting her afterwards on horseback in the Park, accompanying her cousins the Ladies S—— and her uncle the Duke, he joined the party. She rode gracefully, and looked particularly well. A bevy of dandies joined them also, and (as upon such occasions alone she did,) she became talkative. One of the Ladies S—— seeing a man in a tree looking at them as they rode by, observed he was like Charles in the oak. This brought on an historical conversation between the two cousins, in which Lady Gertrude remarked, it was a pity that, notwithstanding his wonderful escape, first in the oak, and then in disguise, they should have cut Charles's head off after all!

Her cousins laughed: even the dandies smiled; and the Duke observed gravely that he would make her a present of Hume's History. Poor Tremaine fell back in unconquerable mortification.

Whatever inclination he had had, was now cured, and mere civility took the place of attention: he still, however, scrutinized, but the scrutiny was unfortunate. A letter from Lady Bellenden at Lisbon

announced so much increase of illness, as to make her wish for her daughter to join her; for which her father, who was flying to his wife, desired her to prepare. Many of her friends condoled with her on the situation of her mother. "Yes!" said she "it is quite shocking, and most provoking too just now, at the moment when we've got to town, and the balls are all beginning."

Tremaine heard this, and from that moment regarded the fair Gertrude not merely with indifference, but aversion. This was the

"Last scene of all,
"And ends this strange eventful history."

CHAP. X.

IN WHICH SYMPTOMS ARE HANDLED WITH GREAT LEARNING.

"How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
"Like softest music to attending ears."

SHAKSPEARE.

Tremaine's barouche had passed Homestead Hall by half a mile, and the inhabitants of that quiet mansion had been in bed for half an hour, before

any one of the party seemed disposed to break the silence in which they had departed from Bellenden House.

Their way lay through a valley watered by the Wharf,* whose meadowed banks exhaled all the sweetness of the hay harvest. On one side were woods, buried by the evening shade, save where the moon, just risen, had, not "*fired*," but silvered the "tops of the eastern pines." Not a sound broke in upon the stillness, except the regular returns of the horses' feet, and now and then the bark of a distant watch-dog from the hills above.

It was a scene to sooth the senses of all the party, and that soothing each seemed afraid to disturb. All were therefore silent.

Evelyn was employed in drawing a comparison between the richness of the treat which at present courted him, and the contests of vanity he had just witnessed. Georgina, the sweet and natural Georgina, gave herself up the more to the unsophisticated pleasure of the scene, from the recollection of the many artificial parts she had just seen acted, by persons who yet would have been enraged beyond forgiveness, if their sincerity had in any thing been questioned. And Tremaine required all the softness which by degrees stole upon him, to enable him to forget the disgust of the last hours, so as to think,

* A very beautiful river in Yorkshire.

much more to talk of them with the commonest patience.

For the first mile, indeed, he was seriously revolving a vow within himself, never again to stir out of the precincts of Woodington; when he recollected the effects of such a vow upon the forlorn Sir Hildebrand, and corrected it into a resolution never again to go to a public day, or to extend his acquaintance beyond those neighbours who were at that instant his companions.

In these thoughts the carriage rolled rapidly on, and the spell of silence seemed likely to continue: when Evelyn, after contemplating the moon, which, now risen higher, began to glitter in the rippling of the water, suddenly broke out with, "If Doctor M'Ginnis were here, what would he——"

"For Heaven's sake," cried Tremaine, looking almost astounded, "who but yourself could think of interrupting such a scene as this with that odious man's name!"

"Perhaps," answered the Doctor, drily, "you might like Mrs. Neville's or Miss Lyttleton's better?"

"Worse and worse," observed Tremaine; "those women are absolute imps."

"For shame," said Georgina, with gentleness: "this charming night ought to cure ill-humour, whatever our reason for it."

"You are always so good!" replied Tremaine; "but even *you*, if you would but answer honestly—"

"That I will, if I answer at all," said Georgina.

"Have you then been happy," asked Tremaine, "in any one minute of your visit?"

"Yes, very, in every part of it spent with dear Lady Bellenden."

"Which amounted to that one minute;" pursued Tremaine; "but during any other?"

"Happy is an important word," replied Georgina, hesitatingly; "and I have even been mortified; but I have also been amused."

"Mortified by a handsome fool, and amused by a virago," rejoined Tremaine. "I watched every turn of that tell-tale countenance."

"You seem to have read it well," observed Evelyn, rather seriously.

"He who runs may read," cried Tremaine.

"She is certainly no dissembler," concluded her father.

"I own you have made me out," pursued Georgina; "for I was hurt by Lady Gertrude's *finery*, but more amused than disgusted by Miss Lyttleton's rattle, especially as Mrs. Neville seemed to think she meant no ill."

"My dear Georgina!" cried Tremaine; and in the warmth of the moment he pressed her hand—

Dear Georgina! her hand pressed, and in a soft

summer's night!—Then a declaration is at length coming from the refined *fastidieux*.

Now there are three reasons against this. In the first place, the lady's father was present; which would have included a solecism in the etiquette of these matters never to be forgiven. Believe me, I have studied the subject. In the next, he had no suspicion whatever how she would have taken a declaration, if he had made one; it would therefore have been altogether contrary to rule,—since, founded or not founded, there must be at least a hope on the part of the gentleman, before he screws himself up to the mark in question. Thirdly and lastly, (and which, perhaps, had better have been put first,) he had himself no thought whatever of making a declaration.

In sober truth, Tremaine pressed Miss Evelyn's hand, merely because he was pressing his argument; and though it was a soft hand, a delicate hand, a tender, elegant, and feminine little hand, as any you should see in a summer's night, (and moreover such a hand was a part of a beautiful girl, which Tremaine particularly admired) yet he knew no more that at that moment he was pressing it, than if it had been Miss Carysfort's.

Not that he was insensible to all the little thrills and emotions, which even the tip of a finger can sometimes convey through another finger, up to the very heart; but then his heart must have been

previously awakened, and the act itself must have proceeded in company with the proper associations.

But in this instance the associations were not in unison, for they were all employed upon persons who excited the reverse of tenderness within his bosom,—namely, Mrs. Neville, Lady Gertrude, and the Amazon.

It was not exactly the same with Georgina; for with her pure, unruffled soul, attuned generally to softness, and full of that respect for herself which perfect innocence always creates, she had forgotten all the little disappointments which Lady Gertrude had made her for a moment feel; the noise and nonsense she had witnessed had begun to sink from her remembrance; and she was open alone to the impressions of the scenery we have been describing. With her, associations were all the other way. When Tremaine, therefore, uttered his exclamation, and pressed her hand to boot, as if to prevent its being lost upon her, a sensation of surprise, not unaccompanied with pleasure, came over her. It tingled in the fingers he pressed with his, passed up the arm, and took the road to a heart as pure as that Seraphina's which, in the dream of a moral writer of the last age, was found without a spot.*

I say, "took the road," because I am far from

* See the Spectator, No. 537.

abusing the despotic powers with which authors are invested, of relating whatever they please of what passes in a young lady's bosom, whether they are sure of the fact or not, and all because there is no fear of contradiction. I therefore do not pretend to say that this action and speech of Tremaine's went directly home to that lovely heart; but content myself with what squares better with both truth and probability, in saying they took the road to it. It is certain that Georgina had been gratified by his attentions during the whole of the visit to Bellenden House, where he seemed to have neither eyes nor ears for any body but herself, except when forced to make comparisons between her and others, which ended uniformly and greatly to her advantage.

In this frame of mind, give me leave to say that an endearing expression, though involuntary, (and more so if accompanied by a squeeze of the hand,) becomes often critical with a young and sensible girl, especially if it happen in the country, and by moonlight by the bank of a river. It has been known sometimes to decide the thing, almost without the party's knowing it herself.

Her father observed the action, and heard the exclamation too; but on him it made not the least impression. And why? Simply I believe because he was not a young girl.

"My dear Georgina!" cried Tremaine, and press-

ing her hand as he said it, "you are so honest yourself, that you confide at once in another's honesty; but of all women, do not be run away with by Mrs. Neville."

"Did she ever run away with *you?*" asked the Doctor.

His daughter laughed at the question, while Tremaine returned, "She was nearer doing so than you are aware of—but, thank Heaven! I escaped."

"But the application to giddy-brain?" said Evelyn.

"That as Mrs. Neville can be all things to all men, and all women," replied Tremaine, "her account of the person in question is not to be trusted."

"Poor giddy-brain!" exclaimed the Doctor: "but I understand Mrs. Neville was very civil to Georgy, and invited her to Belvidere Castle, and promised balls, and I know not what, at the assizes. I protest I have a great mind she should go."

"To be left again in the lurch," said Tremaine, "the moment a Lady Gertrude appears."

"I acknowledge I should not like that," remarked Georgina; "and should prefer Miss Lyttleton a thousand times. She at least seems to have honesty."

"The honesty of a wild cat," answered Tremaine.

"I confess," said the Doctor, "I thought she scratched admirably: but will you tell us why you hate her?"

"Simply because she departs from every one point

in the character of her sex, which makes it either respectable or amiable."

"She hunts," observed the Doctor.

"And would no doubt fight a duel," continued Tremaine, "and drink and swear, were drinking and swearing again in fashion among men. She is fearless in unsexing herself, and I confess I never see her without wondering at her petticoats, as much as if I beheld a man in woman's clothes; and all this is to be excused because she means no harm."

"Surely you are too severe," said Georgina: "do you really know any harm in her?—any vice?"

"Not positive wickedness, as there is in Miss Carysfort," returned Tremaine; "but short of wickedness, all that can make a woman disgusting to a man, in disappointing him, every moment, of his just expectations."

"Just expectations!" said Georgina.

"Yes: for does not Miss Evelyn know, better than any other, how the hope of being pleased, soothingly and elegantly pleased, is excited by the mere approach of a young woman! What delight do we not expect from her softness! that softness which real beauty will always take for her handmaid; that softness which wins our recollections when beauty itself may be no more; that softness, in short, which she who asks this question would better know how to

appreciate, but that she possesses so much of it as to be unconscious of its value."

He paused, and looked as if he meant more even than he had said.

"This is very delicate," thought Georgina; and it was almost doubtful whether the application of it to her, or the sentiment itself, pleased her most.

"You will please, Mr. Tremaine," said Evelyn, "not to turn my girl's head with your flattering tongue."

"The best if not the only excuse I have heard for Miss Lyttleton," continued Tremaine, not minding him, "is that she is eccentric. How many faults does not that word generate, as well as defend in men! But in women it is totally out of character. Neither genius, nor wit, nor generosity, nor even honesty, can make up for it; so peculiarly does the real power of a woman depend upon her power of pleasing, and so exclusively does that, for more than a moment, depend upon softness."

"I agree," said Evelyn.

"Never indeed was there such a mistake," pursued Tremaine, "as when a female supposes that eccentricity can do more than amuse. That it should attract or inspire that fondness, that devotion of heart, which alone is love—which forms at once the pride of woman and the happiness of man—might as well be expected from the tricks of a monkey."

" I agree again," cried Evelyn.

Georgina smiled, and felt all the force of the sentiment, but was too much pleased to interrupt him.

He went on—" It may perhaps be want of gallantry to talk to *you* so much of gentleness; but remember it was Miss Lyttleton that forces me to revert to what I think is the intention of the Creator himself in this respect; for if woman was ' Heaven's last best gift, the ever new delight' of man, it was because of her gentleness. That is properly the ' strong enforcement' of the sex. It is true you talk of your conquests, and we own ourselves your slaves; but it is gentleness that wins us, and not a violence or roughness like our own. Never was there a juster thought or better conceived, than Otway's, however trite the passage—

' Nature formed you
' To *temper* man—we had been brutes without you.' "

" There is no want of gallantry in this," thought Georgina, still afraid to interrupt him.

" But I own I cannot be tempered by a *fellow brute*," continued Tremaine. " No! as nothing can be more wise or more kind in respect to mutual happiness, than the division of our different provinces, so nothing can be more mistaken than for either to invade the other. But your favourite poet will give

it you better in three lines than I could in three volumes:—

> ' For contemplation he, and valour form'd,
> ' For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
> ' He for God only, she for God in him.' "

" Delightful!" cried Georgina, and a soft sigh, (certainly not one of pain) stole from her bosom; while she alternately looked at Tremaine and at the river, which was now silvered all over by the moon.

" I give up Miss Lyttleton!" said Georgina.

" I knew you would," said Tremaine, " for there is not the least affinity between you—nor is your heart more opposite to Mrs. Neville's than your manners to Miss Lyttleton's."

Shall we say that from this time, that good-will with which, somehow or another, with all his paradoxes, all his inconsistency, Tremaine had contrived to inspire Georgina, began to take a more soft and serious turn in her breast?—that she felt, although there was much to correct, yet that there was also something much more congenial with herself than at least she had ever yet discovered in any other man?

The truth of history perhaps requires that we should own this, notwithstanding the certainty that awaits us of the indignation of that whole tribe of

fair ones, who, just emerging into light and life, think for the most part, they might as well be again immerged in darkness, (or, what is the same thing, return once more to the horrors of school,) as be consigned at twenty to the love of a man of eight and thirty.

Do not, however, let the mistake be incurred, that because there was a great deal of good-will, of mutual deference, and mutual complacency, between these parties; because they loved each other's company; because Tremaine remembered no one of the spoilt children of the world to be compared to the rosy sweetness, the natural sense, and the natural grace of Georgina; and because Georgina always saw something in Tremaine, which by seeming ready to sacrifice his very prejudices to his wish to please her, won a wish on her part to please him: do not, I say, incur the mistake that the feelings of the parties amounted to love.

Pray what then did they amount to?

To something a great deal better.

And yet, with all his years, Tremaine could still "make ballads on his mistress's eyebrow!"—could still think Evelyn Hall the prettiest view from Woodington; nay, I verily believe, could we have ascertained it, that if a glimmer of her night-candle could have been discovered through Georgina's window-shutter, he would never have been able

to retire to rest without opening his own to contemplate it; which, let me tell you, is a very critical symptom.

A pause of some minutes ensued after Tremaine's eulogium on gentleness, and while each of the trio seemed occupied with the lovely scene around them, or listening to the not unsolemn rhythm of the regular trot of the horses, (which broke but did not seem to disturb the silence of the night,) each was engaged with his own thoughts. Tremaine felt that he had enforced a favourite principle the better for having the best practical example of it so close at his side: while that example, who, if ever woman was exempt from vanity, was spotless in that respect, could yet not help reverting every minute to the turn he had given his theory, in applying it by a delicate inference to herself. Let us confess too, (unaccountable as it may appear), that her memory every now and then, and almost unconsciously, found itself dwelling on those emphatic words and wishes of her *protégée* Mary, in which that she should be mistress of Woodington, and consequently the inseparable companion of its master, was plainly included.

Whether this arose from any of those quick glancing transitions of thought, which depend upon such secret associations as are not to be traced, and seem therefore mere arbitrary ebullitions of fancy, having nothing to do with the heart: or whether

they proceeded by the direct and perceptible road from the heart itself into the brain; philosophical as we are, we own ourselves unable to tell—and certainly Georgina herself could not ascertain the true state of the case. All we know is, that during several minutes, while her eye seemed absorbed by the landscape through which she was passing, her imagination was closed in a reverie, not less novel than pleasing, in which Tremaine bore by far the principal share.

In this reverie, the carriage still rolled on—its conductors seemingly (and strangely in Georgina's mind) unconscious of the interesting scene that absorbed her—till it came to Woodington, where both drivers and horses would not unwillingly have stopt, thinking the Doctor's post-chaise would be in waiting. It however had had no orders to return, and Tremaine commanding his postillions on to Evelyn Hall, they were a little surprised, not only that their so natural expectations were disappointed, but that their master, who could so conveniently and comfortably have slipt into his own bed, (it being now past midnight,) should yet think of going on himself, merely to return alone.

These postillions were certainly not in love!

CHAP. XI.

MR. TREMAINE IMPROVES.

" Lofty and sour to them that loved him not;
" But to those men that sought him, sweet as Summer."

SHAKSPEARE.

We shall not inquire whether Mr. Tremaine had any, or what dreams, when he was quietly deposited at home, after rather a softer farewell of his friends than usual, in which he not only did not disapprove, but absolutely sought the soft pressure of Georgina's hand: so easy is it for prejudice, when founded more in spleen than nature, to be overcome. It will be recollected, indeed, that in a short but very important chapter of this work, to fall in love was enumerated (together with falling into a horse-pond) as one of the cures for the spleen: and certain it is, that even the incipient symptoms of this delightful remedy (I do not mean the horse-pond) had begun already to operate upon Tremaine's disease.

What can be so interesting, said a fox-hunter, once to a politician, as a hard-run chase?

What! replied the politician—why, a hard-run division in the House of Commons!

Tremaine had tried both, and found that, like other medicines, they lost their effect by repetition. He now seemed to court his new one with every hope of success.

She is certainly, said he at eight o'clock one morning, as he looked towards Evelyn Hall from his terrace seat, more in the perfection of her nature than any other female being I ever beheld; and her father is the worthiest, perhaps the most sensible of men.

Now a great revolution must have obviously taken place in the mind of the *fastidieux*, before all this could have happened. For in the first place, he was not only up, but dressed, and in the air at eight o'clock. Perhaps the air was refreshing?—So it always had been!—The morning fine?—So it often had been!—Perhaps he was without sleep?—So he generally had been!—Perhaps he had been convinced by Evelyn's arguments?—That he only sometimes had been!—What then had produced all this?—Simply an observation which had been made from the rosy lips of Georgina, that there was something so benignant in the morning air that she not only felt better in health and spirits, but more grateful in heart to Him who sent it, and consequently more pleased and happy all the day long.

"Would not a cold-bath have the same effect?"—asked Tremaine.

"Possibly upon the spirits," answered the lady, "but not upon the heart; nor can I ever view the face of nature, smiling and fresh, and seeming absolutely to breathe, as it always does in the early morning, without feeling a sentiment of gratitude (perhaps I ought to say of devotion) towards its Author, for which I am, I hope, the better many hours afterwards."

She said this so unaffectedly, and looked so sincerely pious as she said it, that her beauty seemed to assume a new, certainly a more engaging, and even a more imposing influence, than Tremaine had ever yet felt from any other being.

He answered nothing, but thought like Comus,

> "She fables not. I feel that I do fear
> "Her words, set off by some superior power."

And so they were; but the power was nothing but nature, speaking in nature's accents, to one who had so long been accustomed to artificial life, that they seemed to belong to something divine.

"My God!" thought Tremaine, "that ever a cold and selfish exclusive should have been able to interest me for a single hour!"

Mr. Tremaine rose the next day at eight, to the astonishment, and the next day after also, to the consternation of Monsieur Dupuis, who, being in many particulars as refined as his master, loved to lie

in bed as long, but not being as much in love with Mrs. Watson (the only person whom his self-consequence would allow him to think of) as his master was with Georgina, the reform which took place was not submitted to, either with a good grace, or without remonstrance.

Seeing that it was continued for three mornings running, he could not help exclaiming, as he opened the windows according to order on the fourth, "Apparemment la santé de Monsieur s'est bien rétablie, puisqu'il se lève à si bonne heure."

Tremaine making him no answer, he went on, "Monsieur me paroît beaucoup changé depuis peu; et à ce qu'on dit——"

"Truce with your *on dits*," interrupted the master, who had the taste to have a horror of making a confidant of his valet; "*on dits* are always impertinent."

This was said in a tone which generally silenced Monsieur Dupuis as long as he could be silenced; which was seldom more than one minute at a time. Returning therefore to the charge, he said he only meant to observe that a master he had served in France, of a weak and delicate constitution, had made himself a great deal worse by taking to rise early;—and that as to the on dit, it concerned Mademoiselle Georgina, de qui Madame Vatson ———"

"I must desire," again interrupted Tremaine,

"that neither you nor Watson will give yourselves the liberty of talking of me or my neighbours."

"C'est seulement," replied the unabashed valet, "que Vatson la trouve la plus charmante Demoiselle du monde, et que l'on dit ——"

"Leave the room," cried Tremaine in a stern voice, which the valet instantly obeyed, and shaking his head as he entered the housekeeper's apartment, observed gravely that their conjectures must certainly be wrong, for as his master would not talk to him on the subject, though he had even mentioned her name, he could not possibly be in love with Miss Evelyn.

His master nevertheless took to rising early in consequence of Miss Evelyn's notions, and Miss Evelyn's advice; nay, what is more, he took to manual labour,—for he was actually detected one evening at Evelyn Hall, (and strange to say, after dinner, though only seven o'clock,) in the very act of assisting her to water some carnations and moss roses, of which she was particularly careful. Of these flowers too he became so fond himself, that he would sometimes pass full half an hour in conference with his own gardener, upon the best mode of transplanting and rearing them in the parterre at Woodington.

And thus a change, which the force of truth, speaking through the good sense of Evelyn himself, could not produce, (as has been more fully related in

the course of this work,) the approving smile of a winning and virtuous girl had thoroughly effected.

To shut himself up, indeed, became now no longer that fixed principle to which he had sacrificed his happiness, and almost his health; and though he could unbend as little as ever to what he called the boors, or what, in his mind, was little removed from them, mere every-day characters, (two classes which embraced, he thought, by far the greatest proportion of his acquaintance, whether in town or country,) yet the effort of mind which Evelyn's conversation constantly excited, and the sweet desire of pleasing and being pleased, excited by another, (in itself sufficient happiness) left him no longer a slave to ennui.

The effect of this also was to do good in other respects, for it rendered him infinitely more agreeable where he most wished to be so. The play of his mind developed itself in a liveliness which seemed only natural to it; and the colour had returned to his cheek with earlier hours, and more regular exercise.

In this improved state, a fuller indulgence was given to the natural benevolence of his heart, to which none that were in want ever applied in vain; and his indolence being much overcome, he was even known to seek out objects of relief, as well as to relieve them. His old friend Watson, and even

Dupuis, were made confidants, or rather instruments, on those occasions, and whatever was done, found its way straight to Evelyn Hall—between whose domestics and those at Woodington there was as constant intercourse as between the masters. Not that Monsieur Dupuis' dignity condescended very often to shine upon a *ménage* in which there was no second table. Indeed he was frequently known to lament his hard fate, in having no neighbours worthy of him, any more than his master; insomuch that it once escaped him that his master himself was the only fit companion he could find in the country: and this coming to Evelyn's ears, it was made good use of, to cure, by its ridicule, the fastidiousness which had become so burthensome both to master and man.

Between Watson, however, and Evelyn's housekeeper, or rather Georgina's maid, (for Georgina herself was housekeeper in chief,) there had always been intimacy, and frequent visiting; and, as may be supposed, the transactions of one family were not long concealed from the other. Many traits of generosity on the part of Tremaine were therefore promulgated without his knowing it, in the quarter where, had he been a designing man, he would most have wished to have had them published—so high did they raise him where he most wished to be raised.

In short, all that Watson knew was naturally con-

veyed to Georgina's maid, and as naturally through her to Georgina herself. It was not that the young lady encouraged the loquacity of her attendant, or made a confidant of her; for she had too much natural dignity for such a conduct. But what she could not encourage, she was frequently not able to prevent; and Mrs. Margaret Winter having been an old servant of her mother, about her own person from her cradle, fond of her young mistress, and moreover penetrating enough to discover what was or was not agreeable to her, poor Georgina had many things to be said for her, (particularly if we add the dearth of topics in a country seclusion,) when she found herself listening as she sometimes did, if not with complacency, at least without displeasure, to the adroit tattle of her aforesaid waiting gentlewoman.

CHAP. XII.

AN ADVENTURE.

"Oh! fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly,
"For I will touch thee but with rev'rent hands:
"I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,
"And lay them gently on thy tender side.
"Who art thou? Say, that I may honour thee."

SHAKSPEARE.

An incident about this time occurred, which seemed to promise additional happiness to the life of Georgina; for young, sanguine, and innocent, her heart was easily wrought upon to confide in the expectation of whatever her reason and fancy combined to make her hope; nor had she yet been taught by any experience, that what her heart had fair ground to rely upon, could ever fail.

It was in a glowing forenoon in August, when she was returning on horseback from a visit to her aunt, at the town where, as we have formerly mentioned, the sessions were held. Her father having been detained on business, and the distance not great, she had set out attended only by a servant; and the season being hot, she was tempted to explore a way she had heard of, but never knew, through an extensive and shady wood, not many miles distant from

Evelyn Hall. The groom was as ignorant of it as herself, but accustomed always to act, and perfectly mistress of the geographical points of the country, she thought there was no difficulty but what she could easily overcome. Her father was rather pleased with this sort of disposition to act for herself.

On this occasion, however, the road being composed of different horsepaths, of which there were many, crossing one another in different directions, and the wood so umbrageous, that she could scarcely see the sun, so as to know the points of the compass, she became entangled in the labyrinth.

She consulted indeed with the faithful John; but except in fidelity, John was very little to be relied on—and least of all in a matter that required intelligence. In this emergency, after riding for some time, she was not a little pleased to observe, at the end of a sort of avenue in the wood, a house—or rather as it appeared, the remains of one—whose chimney gave the only sign that it was inhabited; for not a creature, whether human or otherwise, seemed to belong to it. Every thing about it seemed to partake of the stillness of the scene in which it was placed; for not a sound, except now and then the note of a bird, which the heat seemed also much to repress, was to be heard.

While John, who had dismounted, was on the quest for intelligence, she had leisure for a nearer

survey of the place, which small and even deserted as it had at a distance appeared, now let in a deeper front with a better air, and a ground plot elegantly kept; from the neatness of its turf and gravel walks, its benches, and its flowers, it seemed a little fairy-land.

"I wish the fairy herself would appear," thought Georgina, "for I think I should like to know her, exclusive of having lost my way."

Georgina had been so accustomed to call at all the cottages in the neighbourhood, where she was not only well known, but beloved, so that every door opened with gladness at her approach, that it never occurred to her to suppose she was doing any thing out of the common course in thus riding up to a strange house. Besides, a traveller who has lost her way, is protected by all laws of hospitality even amongst the most barbarous. Add to this, what after all we must not disguise, that a little spice of romance warmed sometimes the young bosom of this natural girl,—and her curiosity might be thought pardonable—by any one but an exclusive.

She was therefore a little shocked, as well as disappointed, to hear a voice of no very sweet tone—scolding rather than informing John of his way. It proceeded from a sort of old cook-maid, who now made her appearance.

"As for your losing yourself," said she, "don't

believe nothing about it, not I; and I don't see how any body could find us out that did not know the way better than I do myself, who am not of these parts."

By this time, however, perceiving Georgina, whose mere appearance conciliated instant good-will, she dropped a courtesy, and said, "To be sure I find he speaks the truth, and belongs to a lady, but I am sorry I can't inform your ladyship, for I comed from a great distance myself and never heard of Iflin Hall."

"May I ask," said Georgina with great sweetness, "whether your mistress is at home? I dare say she can tell."

"La! no, Ma'am," returned the dame! "they be out, and if they was not, they knows still less than me; and besides they would be extremely sorry—that is, I dare say they would be glad to see your ladyship, if they knew you, but——"

"But what?" asked Georgina, observing her to pause.

"They never sees nobody, nor likes to be seen."

"May I not inquire their name?" said Georgina.

"Dear me, no! for they told me not to answer any questions about them, if any body comed, and as for that, I am sure I don't know their names myself, they be so hard to pronounce, and so I am sorry to

beg to go back to my work, and I am sorry I can't tell you the way."

So saying, the faithful but abrupt female retreated to the house, the door of which she closed with a violence which shewed that nothing more was to be expected from her.

Georgina was now in a real dilemma, not at all lessened by the change in the sky, in which large and heavy clouds had been gathering, and were now ready to burst over her head in all the drenching force of a summer storm. Some poultry that had been feeding on the green sward denoted their expectation of it, by flying to their sheds near the cottage, where they drew up as it were in self-defence: and flocks of birds were seen in the air crossing the glade, in search of the deepest shelter of the forest. At length a thunder-cloud broke with a dreadful crash, and the rain descended in a torrent which in one instant soaked both the lady and her groom through and through.

Georgina was not unused to this, and had she at all known her way home, would not have minded riding through it; but to scamper in a storm through paths, the direction of which was absolutely unknown, and which might have rendered every exertion worse than unavailing, by leading her farther and farther from the home she sought—

all prudence forbade it—she therefore resolved to alight, and, inhospitable as the cottage had hitherto been, to ask an asylum against the continued rain; and as there was no time to hesitate at the door, she directed the man with the horses to seek a neighbouring barn, and proceeded herself round the building, till she found and entered the kitchen.

The dame who there presided, though her fidelity to orders made her appear rugged, was not really unkind; and seeing a delicate young creature of superior mould, and a sweetness of countenance which immediately made friends, dripping wet, and apparently in distress, she, with many lack-a-daisies, begged her to come in and dry herself; in order the better to do which she proposed to her to pull off her habit, which was immediately hung to the fire.

Meantime the courteousness of Georgina's demeanour, in gratitude for the old woman's attentions, won upon the latter to such a degree, that she lost all her reserve in kind fears for her safety.

"Well," said she, "I declare if you be'nt as nice as our Miss; and a whiter skin; and as young too! Pity you should take cold; yet I fear it, for your handkerchief is all wet. Well, I have a great mind to get you some of Miss's things, till your's be dried.'

Georgina felt really the necessity of something of the sort, but to avoid the difficulty which the old

woman seemed to have about it, she proposed to her to lend her a clean handkerchief of her own. To this the hostess assented; not but what Miss, she said, would be glad to lend her all the things she had; and she had drawers full of muslins and laces: only as she was not at home, and hated strangers so much, she was timersome about it.

She now began to think that the kitchen was not a proper place for a young lady, who was evidently of higher order. Forgetful therefore of her former stiffness, she said such a young lady as she ought not to stay in the kitchen, and fairly invited her into the parlour, till she had made an end of drying her things.—"Mayhap they may all be ready by the time the storm is over, and you gone before mistress comes home," said the old woman.

"Will you not tell them then of your kindness?" asked Georgina.

"Perhaps I may tell Miss," returned she, "she would so like you if she seed you, but I am afraid Mistress would be angered, though for all that she be good enough."

"You have then two ladies," said Georgina, looking round the room, and observing books, a tambour, and a harp: "are they sisters?"

"No!"

"Mother and daughter perhaps?"

"I don't know," said the old woman: "Miss calls the other Mamma, but only sometimes, and they are not a bit like, though very fond."

"You must not suppose me impertinent," said Georgina, "but as I live a very few miles from them, and they seem strangers, my father, Dr. Evelyn, and myself, would be extremely glad to know, or be of use to them if we could."

"Your ladyship is good," answered the servant, "but I know they wont know nobody."

"Are they not dull?" asked Georgina, perceiving her companion hesitating whether to talk or not.

"Sometimes I suppose they be, but they have enough to do in reading them books," pointing to a table covered with them.

Georgina seeing one of them open, could not help taking it up, and found it to be a Tasso, very elegantly bound, and in the first leaf saw in a beautiful female hand the words, *Il dono del suo carissimo amico, a Mélainie de Montauban.*

The interest, not to say curiosity of Georgina, was much raised at this; but as the old woman could not read, she the less perceived it.

"And who plays the harp?" asked Miss Evelyn, after pausing a little on the book.

"Oh! both Mistresses," was the answer: "indeed one teaches t'other, as indeed she does them books, and every thing else!"

"And have you no master?—"

"No! none!—and as for that, I never seed a man near the house but the gardener."

"Your mistress has no husband, and your young lady no brother?"

"I fancy not," said the woman.

"Fancy not! This is very mysterious," thought Georgina.

Every thing in the room,—the taste of the furniture, though unexpensive, the character of the books, the music, and some very pretty drawings,—all bespoke that the apartment belonged to beings of superior cultivation, and two miniatures highly finished, over the chimney, the one of an officer in the British uniform, the other of a person of remarkable expression, in the costume of Henry the Fourth of France, particularly arrested Georgina's attention.

"Do you know who these are?" asked she.

"No! I don't understand any of them things," was the answer.

She now began to think she might be deemed impertinently intrusive, if she continued longer where she had been given to understand she would not be thought welcome; and the storm appearing to clear away, she resumed her habit, which was now dry, and more than satisfying the old woman for her trouble, she called for her horses, in order to explore her way home.

Scarcely, however, had she left the little gate that led through the garden into the house, but she beheld, already in the avenue, the two persons who had so much excited her inquiries. At least such she supposed two ladies who were advancing towards her with a rapid, yet hesitating step.

The elegance of their movements denoted something of far greater polish than this retired forest had ever yet seen. Georgina felt awkward, and not a little surprised, when one of them, who seemed younger than the other, sprang forward like a bounding roe from the side of its mother to meet her.

Her steps were as graceful as swift; and a countenance not easily described, in which health, joy, and eagerness were blended, absolutely shone upon Georgina like a vision. Though all was tumult and the hurry of an instant, her heart could not help hoping, (and she believed what she hoped,) that it was Mélainie de Montauban.

Both ladies were confused, and the countenance of the supposed Mélainie fell at once abashed and timid, when, upon a nearer approach, she discovered that Georgina was not the person she had taken her for. The eyes of the two girls, however, had met; they were eyes of corresponding intelligence and modesty, and (as they each could not help thinking, though in such a confused moment,) of corresponding kindness.

The elder lady, who had herself advanced with quickened pace, on first discerning Georgina, now also fell back, and received the hand of her young companion, who sought hers, as it were, for protection. Yet still the latter could not help with animated interest, examining the object from which she seemed to fly. Both the strangers then turned, as if desirous of avoiding the meeting, yet hesitatingly, and doubtful what to do; while many a side glance was given by the younger to Georgina, who now (for she could escape no other way,) was, out of sheer necessity, come up to them.

Observing their evident intention to avoid her, she hesitated whether to intrude still farther by apologizing for her original intrusion, or to accommodate herself to their humour, by galloping off. Her disposition inclined her to the last, as least awkward of the two, but her natural politeness checked this disposition; and feeling that she really owed some explanation for being where she was, she accosted both ladies with her usual grace; at the same time her desire of explaining herself was at least not repressed, by observing that the lady who seemed to take the lead was a woman of commanding presence, uncommon elegance of form, and though not young, of great sensibility of features. With such a woman she could not bear to be thought capable of taking a liberty.

Addressing herself, therefore, particularly to her, "I ought I am sure," she said, "to beg pardon for the freedom I am using; but if the ladies I am addressing are the owners of the house I have just left, I cannot but thank them for the asylum it has afforded me."

The elder lady replied, with ready but distant politeness, she was happy if she had found any accommodation there during the storm.

A constrained sort of air then took possession of both speakers, and the stranger, with a bending preparation for a courtesy, rather than a courtesy itself, seemed anxious for the moment when Georgina should take leave.

That would have been instantly done, if the awakened sparkle of her young companion's countenance had not arrested Miss Evelyn's intended movement, spite of all the endeavours she thought she was making to urge on her horse.

"Can I be excused," said she, looking at her, "if I hope that the nearness of this wood to my father's house may have proved more fortunate to me, than in merely giving me a refuge from bad weather, and that I may be allowed to profit by what I now know is in the neighbourhood?"

The young *inconnue* turned a pair of large black eyes on the face of her companion, as if entreating that such a hint might be taken; but reading no as-

sent there, she let them fall in almost sadness upon the ground. She could not help, however, raising them again with sweetness upon Georgina, and crossing her arms upon her bosom with inexpressible grace, courtesied her thanks. Not a word was spoken, but her manner operated like a charm upon the heart to which it was directed.

"I may at least, I hope, be allowed," continued Georgina, "to explain who it is whom your servant's hospitality has obliged. My father, Dr. Evelyn, is indeed the owner of part of this wood, and our house cannot be more than five or six miles from you."

"And you are Miss Evelyn!" said the young *inconnue*, with a look of pleasure, and an accent, not purely English, but which sounded in Georgina's ears as uncommonly soft.

The elder lady here interfered, and with grave, though graceful civility, replied that no one, however retired, could be in that neighbourhood without having heard of the name of Evelyn. "I only hope," she added, "that if we cannot profit by such kindness, such obliging frankness as you have shewn us, it will not be imputed to our being ungrateful for the honour."

At these words, taking her young charge by the arm, she fairly obliged her to turn towards the house with her; and Georgina's only consolation was to observe that she, whom she more than ever supposed

to be Mademoiselle de Montauban, more than once turned round, as if to express her regret at the separation.

Miss Evelyn was too well bred to make any farther attempt at an intercourse which seemed to be so expressly forbidden; yet was so much hurt at the reception of her advances, and at the same time so occupied with the interesting manners of the younger stranger, that in a slow walk she threw the reins on her horse's neck, letting him carry her where he would; from which situation she was only roused by John.

This personage, though a very honest lad, having no sentiment in his composition, had beheld the whole adventure (such are the different modes by which nature works,) with the most entire indifference; if indeed we may say so, when the thought of his wet clothes and an empty stomach, which directed his imagination with particular pleasure to the Doctor's kitchen, can be said to be indifference. Be this as it may, he conceived it but a very natural decision that the object, for which alone they had turned out of the road, should be ascertained without farther delay: and perceiving that her horse seemed to lead his mistress, and not his mistress to direct her horse, he made bold to ask her if "them there ladies had told her the way home?"—

This very sensible question roused Georgina from

her reverie, and she owned she knew no more of the road than she did before.

"I thought so," said John, with as much respect as his wishes to be at home permitted: "and therefore I thinks its lucky to see that bagsman there—for them people knows more about these out of the way roads than e'er a postboy of them all."

The person whom he called a bagsman was what, in politer language, is denominated a gentleman traveller. He was pushing on at a regular rate, upon a stout brisk horse, and would by no means stop at John's call; but being overtaken, he readily told them he knew Evelyn Hall very well, as he passed it six times in every year. He therefore undertook to lead them through the wood into Stony Lane, a road well known both to Georgina and her groom, and which in about five miles more led them to the home they had been seeking.

CHAP. XIII.

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUED.

" Sir, your Queen
" Desires your visitation, and to be
" Acquainted with this stranger."

SHAKSPEARE.

GEORGINA was too full of her adventure not to mention it to her father the moment she saw him. She eagerly inquired whether he knew any strangers who had come lately to reside in a house in the middle of Somerville Wood? His negative answer produced an explanation, and the history she had to give,—which roused his curiosity, and it was settled that in a day or two both Georgina and her father should ride across that part of the wood again, and pay them a visit in form. The expectation of this delighted Georgina, and she grew impatient for the day.

" I cannot see any harm in it," said Evelyn; " it is but neighbourly. They are lonely and may want society; they are strangers and may want good offices. At any rate, they may have the refusal of us," added he, as he mounted his horse.

As they approached the place, however, eager as she was, Georgina felt a little awkward, not to say confused, at making a visit, which to one of the parties concerned she feared might be the reverse of agreeable; and though supported by her father, she could not help feeling that it was her own interest about the charming *incognita* that alone had prompted the measure.

In truth, as we have observed, and it cannot be denied, this amiable girl was a little tinctured with romance. Not that romance which, as in Eugenia, was the effect of what is called novel reading, or an over indulgence of ill-regulated sensibility; but merely such as was not unnatural at her age, particularly when we consider the seclusion of her life. Even if it had been of the first sort, she would not perhaps have been wholly without excuse; for the good Doctor himself was (or rather had been) a most voracious devourer of all that kind of food: and though he carefully locked it up from his daughter, whom he scarcely ever permitted to look at what he denominated trash, (meaning the common order of novels,) it was a trash to which, it was shrewdly suspected, particularly in his youth, he had had no sort of objection.

Be this as it may, we now behold his daughter, such as we have described her, and with her twenty years and no more over her head, upon the point of

offering her acquaintance to two perfect strangers, without the least knowledge of their characters, or that it would be well received, if we may not rather say, with the fear that it would be ill received.

As a heroine, we are aware this must for ever let her down; nevertheless, the whole of her motives should be appreciated before she is condemned. There was, in fact, a little secret in them, which although her heart perhaps knew it very well, it had not yet dared to whisper to her understanding: I know not why, except that heart and understanding are frequently at variance, without either of them being much in the wrong for being so.

In a word then, this Mélainie de Montauban, (if it was she) about her own age, who would willingly have lent her all the things she had, and who would like her so if she could but see her; who had indeed actually seen her, and seemed to like her;—who was she? That she was good-natured, young, elegant, and secluded, and probably therefore desirous of a companion of her own age, appeared clear; that with such a name she could not be meanly derived was likely; that she was innocent was to be hoped: yet who was the *carissimo amico?*

It must be owned, the latter, though it a little puzzled the Doctor, weighed not a feather against the other considerations with his daughter; and the sanguine, affectionate, and perhaps too romantic

Georgina, could not help believing, as she wished that she was on the eve of realising the only want of her life, in finding a person of her own age and sex whom she might love and confide in, and call by the name of friend.

On their approach to the house, the sound of the harp, and two voices in exquisite harmony, charmed their ears and arrested their progress.

The voices proceeded from the room into which Georgina had been ushered, and the windows being open, the visitors had opportunity for a few moments to distinguish the music and the words. They composed an air which was familiar both to Evelyn and his daughter. The words were addressed

TO A NATURAL CHILD.

" Oh toi, qui n'eus jamais dû naître !
" Gage trop cher d'un fol amour,
" Puisses-tu ne jamais connoître
" L'erreur qui te donna le jour.

" Que ton enfance goûte en silence
" Le bonheur qui pour elle est fait;
" Et que l'Envie, toute ta vie,
" Ignore ou taise ton secret."

I don't like these words at all, thought Evelyn. All reflections however were spared, by their being discerned by the ladies, who had heard the trampling

of the horses, and ran instantly to the windows, from which the youngest as instantly retreated.

A very well mannered and well attired *soubrette* came to the little gate, to ask their commands; and as the ladies, from having been seen, could not well be denied, (at least not in a forest in Yorkshire) upon asking if they were at home, the party were admitted. To Georgina's concern, however, upon being shewn into the sitting-room, they were received by her cold acquaintance alone; for the touching and intelligent *inconnue* had fled, or been forced to fly.

The Doctor, with a mixture of frankness and ceremony, which was sometimes not unbecomingly blended in him, made his obeisance to the lady of the house.

"I am come, Madam," said he, "though I have not even the honour of knowing your name, to return you my best thanks for the refuge your house was so kindly allowed to afford my daughter."

"My name," said the lady, with polite but not over-warm civility, "is Rochford; and I shall always feel pleasure that any thing belonging to me could give accommodation to Miss Evelyn. I have however no right to assume even the small merit of receiving her, since I had not the pleasure of being at home when the storm overtook her."

"The merit of servants," answered the Doctor, "is always that of their employers. I have, however,

I own, another motive for doing myself this honour, a little less disinterested I fear than gratitude."

Mrs. Rochford not perceiving his meaning, he added with an air of gallantry, "though in the midst of neighbours, we know all the value of comparison, and have sufficient relish for refined and elegant society, to court it whenever it appears. We are fortunate, therefore, in the forms of the world," continued he, "which enables us as old inhabitants to pay our respects (without I hope being thought too forward,) to those who are so good as to settle among us."

Mrs. Rochford was softened by his address, and by the speaking looks of Georgina, which seemed to second it, and replied in terms, which, though guardedly general, shewed that she possessed the ease and ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie. After this the conversation languished, the lady of the house shewing no disposition to keep it alive; when Georgina, vexed at not being allowed to see her wished-for friend, fairly asked if she might not be permitted to pay her compliments to the young lady she had before seen.

"To see her once," added Georgina, "is only to wish to see her again, and as we had a glimpse of her at the window as we came up, I both presume as well as hope that Miss Rochford is not ill."

"Her name is not Rochford," answered Mrs.

Rochford, coolly; "and she is so young, so little used to company, so occupied, and indeed so methodical in her studies, that I trust you will not take it ill if she does not break a rule by appearing in society."

"And yet so formed to add to its pleasures!" said Georgina, with a look of mortification and surprise.

"All in good time," observed Mrs. Rochford, with an air of decision, mixed with civility; "she is yet extremely inexperienced."

"There is no keeping these young ladies back," said Evelyn, smiling significantly. "Miss Evelyn there has been as eloquent in her praises, as she is eager to cultivate her acquaintance: she tells me she is about her own age, and we must not wonder therefore if she thinks her quite fit for the world."

Mrs. Rochford with seriousness replied, she believed her to be much younger, and they were sensible of the honour Miss Evelyn did them; but she shewed no marks of relenting in her decision.

"Can we not prevail?" said Evelyn, looking at the harp, and the music-books still open. "We have at least something in common between us, for we are all musicians. Music has often been blamed for levelling ranks too much, and introducing us into bad company; it will be extremely hard if it may not

be allowed to make some expiation, by lending itself as a link to good."

"I am really distressed," said Mrs. Rochford, "to appear so ill-bred, so insensible to what I feel a very high honour both to myself and this young lady; but I am sure I need not impress upon a gentleman of your character and good sense, either the value of good rules, or the folly of breaking them."

She said this with a gravity which put an end to all farther attempt to gratify the favourite object of Georgina; who, with her father, soon afterwards took her leave, and was allowed to depart by Mrs. Rochford, not only without opposition, but without that lady having expressed the smallest wish that the intercourse should be renewed.

They returned home, each in silent meditation upon the event of their visit, and each endeavouring to explain its mystery, according to their own notions. Georgina imagined that something remarkable, but wholly consistent with innocence, hung over the fate of her wished-for friend: her father thought there might be reasons for this strictness, not over creditable to the younger stranger, and still less to the elder. His reasons, however, he kept to himself.

CHAP. XIV.

MORE AND MORE MYSTERIOUS.

" But whatsoe'er you are,
" Who, hid in desert inaccessible,
" Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
" Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time."

SHAKSPEARE.

GEORGINA's disappointment weighed upon her mind for some days, and was not lessened by her not seeing Tremaine during the interval: nor was her curiosity to know the reason of this at all cured, by being informed by her father (who went over to Woodington on purpose to visit him), that he had gone to York, upon what business nobody could tell; and when to return nobody had been informed. " I am glad, however," said Evelyn, " to find he is so active as to think of any business at all."

The fourth day after the visit to the house in Somerville Wood, Georgina was surprised by the following letter, which the butler who delivered it told her had been brought by a gardener-looking man, who said it required no answer.

" To Miss Evelyn.

" An imperious sense of duty must weigh so much with a lady who herself performs every duty so well, that Miss Evelyn will, I trust, excuse a liberty in thus addressing her, which yet I have a thousand fears in taking. Your politeness to myself, your kind interest about the amiable child over whom I watch with all a parent's solicitude, your father's attentions and admirable character, all conduce to make this effort one of the most painful I ever resolved upon; nor is it the least difficulty I have to struggle with, that she whose heart would seek your's, both from what she has heard and what she has seen, is penetrated with grief at the decision. Strange, however, and bold as it may appear, I am compelled to forego the honour which you condescend to design for us, in your valuable acquaintance; and all that I can hope from this explanation is, that you will acquit me of what, believe me, I do not deserve, an indifference to its favour or an insensibility to its worth. I might with perhaps less awkwardness have obtained my object, by profiting by the ceremonial of the world, and not returning your visit. But though my duty to another might then have been equally performed, it would have been so at the expence of what I owe to myself; which would have

been miserably neglected, if I had left such a person as Miss Evelyn to imagine me, what I never can be,

" The ungrateful

" CAROLINE ROCHFORD."

" Somerville Wood,
August 10th, 1814."

To describe the interest, the emotion of Georgina on reading this letter, would not be easy. The mingled candour and mystery that belonged to it combined to fill her with surprise, and at the same time concern. She immediately sought her father, her counsellor in all difficulties, and asked him what he thought of it?

" Think of it!" said he, " why as I must of every thing that belongs to your strange sex, for you are all of ye inexplicable. Seriously, however, the letter is a good letter, and I shall be very glad if the lady is a good lady; but all this we must leave to time."

" Meanwhile," said Georgina, with sadness, " all my hope of Mélainie, if she is Mélainie, must be given up."

" I fear so," returned Evelyn: " you would not be so uncivil as to force your acquaintance."

" The letter," replied Georgina, " no where looks as if it would be rejected on its own account."

" I should be surprised, my love, if it did," said

Evelyn, " for your friendship, girl, would do honour to an empress."

Georgina, affected, kissed her father's hand, and observing her concern, he bade her be quiet till he had at least discovered who these ladies were; " and I think," said he, " I may get some clue to it, when Tremaine returns, for I know at least the house which they inhabit belongs to him." Then, added he, laughing, " Mrs. Rochford is still a very handsome woman; and who knows that there may not be perhaps in contemplation a nearer connection between them than we are aware of?"

The doctor spoke in jest; but these words somehow or another sunk deep into the mind and heart of Georgina.

CHAP. XV.

MOST MYSTERIOUS OF ALL.

" Rumour is a pipe,
" Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures ;
" And of so easy and so plain a stop,
" That the blunt monster, with uncounted heads,
" The still discordant, wav'ring multitude,
" Can play upon it."

SHAKSPEARE.

Now it happened unfortunately, that while our reverend friend had unwittingly as it were laid the train, another friend, not quite so reverend, was ready to set fire to it, and actually did set fire to it; so that Mr. Tremaine was blown up, and already in the air before he knew where he was.

This friend was no other than Monsieur Dupuis, of honourable memory; and we proceed to detail, step by step, how great things may spring from trivial causes; and if peace was once given to Europe, and the whole kingdom of France, *grand monarque* and all, was once saved by a quarrel between two court ladies, what wonder that a marriage in private life should be retarded, or prevented altogether, by a valet-de-chambre and a waiting-maid ?

We have related, that from the intimacy of the housekeepers of Woodington and Evelyn Hall, the intentions of the one family soon found their way to the other; and chiefly through the communications of Mrs. Margaret Winter; who, to do her justice, had hitherto found nothing but good to relate of Woodington and its master.

The truth of this history, however, obliges us to confess, that some communications, which about this time Mrs. Margaret had occasion to make, did not prove to the advantage of Tremaine. For as Mrs. Margaret's mind was extremely just, without ever having read Cicero, she had arrived, by a sort of natural instinct, at one of the best moral conclusions of that learned heathen; I mean, that the relator of history should not only never dare to tell a falsehood, but should not dare to conceal the truth. Hence, although she had abundantly communicated what had turned out to Tremaine's credit; such as his kindness to his tenants and servants, his paying all the expenses of a law-suit for a poor man, whose family had been oppressed by a rich neighbour, and his frequent helps to decayed gentlemen, chiefly officers who had served with him in the army; yet she at length related some traits and anecdotes, which at any time would have been disagreeable to Georgina, but which in her present frame of mind filled her with inexpressible concern.

Mrs. Watson, Tremaine's housekeeper, was naturally a good and grave woman, and not much more given to canvass her superiors or neighbours, (in other words, to gossiping) than other housekeepers who have little to do generally are. She loved a little talk, but loved her Bible more; and as in her present mode of life Monsieur Dupuis was almost her only companion, and Mrs. Winter her only visitor, she had much time for her favourite study, which began very seriously to lay hold of her mind.

Her progress in religion was not quiescent; and as her own fervour increased, she was struck with the desire of communicating it to others, and far above the rest, (as in fact he most wanted it) to her coadjutor and constant inmate, Monsieur Dupuis.

We shall not stop to inquire into the reasonableness of an English protestant housekeeper, not over well educated herself, hoping to convert a careless, not to say licentious French catholic valet de chambre to religion and virtue. We only agree in one part of her speculation, that as far as the necessity for conversion went, there could scarcely be a better subject than the one she pitched upon; for having also much time upon his hands, he endeavoured, after Mrs. Watson's example, to fill up some of it with reading; but his subjects were generally the reverse of that good woman's; his favourite books being

the *Contes de Voltaire*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Faublas*, *La Pucelle*, and the like—if like there be to those distinguished works.

The pious Watson, 'tis true, did not understand a syllable of these studies, except as to their tendency,—which she very soon found was any thing but what appertained to the improvement of morals, or the confirmation of faith. As she indeed wished to convert Monsieur Dupuis, so the valet, who was somewhat *espiègle* in his nature, thought it but a fair return of kindness to endeavour to unconvert her; and accordingly, to the best of his power, he related to her the stories, or translated the sentiments, which he found so *pétillant* in his favourite authors.

This produced reproof, and then disputes, in which the refined valet was so impenetrable to the religious housekeeper, that in despair, as well as zeal, she threatened to complain of his principles to his master. Monsieur Dupuis was always amused at this, and bursting into laughter, "Ha! ha!" he would say, "you complain of de scholar for learn to read, to de master who teach him. Begar, my master he read all dese book himself; he tink Voltaire and Rousseau, and Monsieur Louvet, les meilleurs écrivains du monde: my master be de man of pleasure comme moi, and he no believe a word of your religion at all."

Shocked at this, as far as she understood it, the well-meaning housekeeper would ask for his authority, when he would very succinctly tell her that he had heard Tremaine over and over again give his opinions upon all these subjects, in various conversations with his friends at table, which had first set him (the valet) upon reading these authors, whom he had heard so much praised: and that as to his being a man of pleasure, he knew what he knew, but would never be *indiscret.*

Indignant at this (for Watson loved her master too well to be very patient under it) she would provoke him still more, by asserting her utter disbelief of any thing he professed to know to Tremaine's discredit; till at length the discretion of the valet giving way to his vanity, he told her, to his certain knowledge, his master at that instant kept a mistress, a very beautiful woman, not many miles off, by whom he had two children, one of them a little boy at school, for whom he had actually himself been sent, when he accompanied his master to York a few days before, and that he was afterwards conveyed to his mother, to pass the summer holidays with her. Monsieur Dupuis added, that if she did not believe him, she might ask Jonathan, who had ridden there with his master last week, and had actually seen the lady. "I no see her, but Jonathan say she was ver prit, only leetel too old."

Struck with this intelligence, the still doubting housekeeper took the first opportunity to ask the groom what he knew, who told her very fairly that he knew very little, only that he had lately attended his master to York, who sent Monsieur Dupuis to some other place for a little boy, with whom they had all returned to within ten miles of Woodington; when Monsieur Dupuis was sent home in the carriage, while his master proceeded with the child in a hired chaise, and himself on horseback, to a house in Somerville Wood; that a mile short of the house the chaise stopt, and he (the groom) was sent on with the little boy and a letter in the chaise, while his master waited his return in the wood; that he delivered his charge and the letter to a very handsome lady, between thirty and forty, who was accompanied by a young girl, as beautiful as the day; that they seemed overjoyed at meeting the little boy, and at receiving the letter; that the child called the young lady sister, and said he had left papa only a mile off, at which the young lady seemed much disappointed, and said, "Oh! mamma, why did he not come?"

This was all the groom knew. But it was enough, and too much, as Watson thought.

Overpowered by these circumstances of persons, time, and place, she had nothing to oppose to it, and with a sigh yielded her belief to the assertion of Monsieur Dupuis; consoling herself as well as she

could, by regularly, in her prayers, remembering her master's reform.

And here the matter might have rested, for the good creature was sufficiently discreet to *intend* not to divulge it, had not that intention been opposed by a temptation which flesh and blood (at least the flesh and blood of a housekeeper) could not withstand. For what can withstand the temptation to gossip in two housekeepers over their evening tea?

"What though he is a little too old," said Mrs. Watson, as she poured it out, "I assure you he is all the fashion in London, is generally out with the gayest all the night long, and there is no young lady that would not be glad to have him. There was Miss Neville and my Lady Gertrude had like to have fit about him, and it was only stopped by his saying he would have neither on 'em. I heard it all from Lady Gertrude's own woman, who used to visit me in Berkeley Square, as you may be doing now, Mrs. Winter."

The grave *chef* of Woodington was now, however, obliged at once to confess her fears that all their speculations were wrong, and that whatever Miss Georgina might feel, Mr. Tremaine neither had, nor ever could have, any thoughts of her.

"He may go farther, and fare worse," said Mrs. Winter, with something like indignation; but upon being informed of the reasons for her ally's suppo-

sition, and her authority for those reasons, she was forced to allow their cogency, discovered an evident impatience to get home, and when at home, an equal impatience for her mistress's bell at night—when during the few minutes' attendance which Georgina's undressing required, the most favourite, or at least the most confidential period of this gentlewoman's life generally occurred.

We will pass, in our hurry to come to other matters, the mode in which the faithful Winter, jealous for her own as well as her lady's honour, (for Winter assumed to herself the credit of a great deal of Tremaine's footing with Georgina,) first led to the subject, and afterwards made the communication in question. It is sufficient that Tremaine, on the authority of Winter, Watson, Dupuis, and Jonathan, (enough to sink down any poor devil at the Old Bailey) was convicted before Georgina of having a mistress, or a concealed wife, and two children, eight or ten miles off; and Georgina was deprived of her entire night's rest in consequence of the news.

Having sighed to her pillow upon it for many hours, she was forced to confess that the mystery of the Somerville Wood house was now cleared up, and that her father's loose hint was dreadfully confirmed.

Two whole days she pondered this matter, and

two whole days she saw not Tremaine. The young heart of Georgina never before knew so much of itself. Winter was not only not repressed, but even encouraged to talk of the subject; at least as far as perfect attention went; for though she professed to say she supposed it mere idle gossip, and not possible to be true, she listened with profound interest to all the proofs which Winter brought, to show that it could not be false.

In the midst of these doubts, a letter from her new friend, or rather acquaintance, Mrs. Neville, plunged her into fresh difficulties.

It began by a very cordial invitation to the races at D—, which were to be uncommonly well attended, and where she made a point, she said, of assembling as much beauty, elegance, and talent, as her influence would permit; that her party was made, but could not be perfect without Georgina. "I would also," she added, "ask your neighbour Mr. Tremaine, but really he has of late grown so uncouth, and towards me so capricious, that he gives me no encouragement: besides, from what I hear of him, I fear more than ever it would be entreaty thrown away. The reports are indeed most strange about him, though very inconsistent with one another. One is, that he has long been either secretly married, or has entertained a mistress, who has followed him from Northamptonshire, and by whom he has two

children. As to the marriage, I have reason to believe that false, whatever the other may be. But what is most confidently said is still more surprising. He was always, you know, eccentric—thinking and acting like no other man. No woman of his acquaintance comes up, it seems, to his standard as a wife; yet a wife he is resolved to have ('tis time at least!); and I am credibly informed he is now engaged in the romantic and nonsensical task of educating a young girl, (nobody knows who) for the express purpose of loving him, and making in time a suitable companion for so very great a man. This, as both he and his fair Indiana are in your neighbourhood, you probably know, and I shall be gratified by hearing the particulars. I must say, however, if true, Lady Gertrude Bellenden has been most shamefully used by him. You of course know all that affair. At any rate, I would have you, my dear Miss Evelyn, be on your guard against this Mr. Bevil,* who, though he affronts half the sex by his high demands upon them, only gives himself the more consequence with those whom he does condescend to distinguish; and report says (which who can be surprised at?) that of all the fair damsels to whom he has offered his attentions, none ever occupied him so much as his charming neigh-

* Alluding I suppose to the romantic Bevil and Indiana of "The Conscious Lovers."—Editor.

bour, with the exception of the poor devoted thing to whom I have alluded. Be assured however that Mr. Bevil, with all his sentiment, is a most fickle being, and I pity the young creature he has immured, only perhaps to send her back into the world, disappointed and unhappy."

Poor Georgina was in a labyrinth of contending conjectures, upon the receipt of this letter. Was the young *inconnue*, who had so much touched her heart, fated then to destroy its growing and happy feelings towards the only person for whom she had yet felt any thing like partiality? or was she a daughter, and not an intended wife—and if so, was the accomplished Mrs. Rochford, either as wife or mistress, the possessor of his affections?—Which of them, or was either of them, Mélainie de Montauban?

These were puzzling questions:—

"Ah!" exclaimed Georgina, "whether as a mistress or an intended wife, it is evident some other female....."

The thought, unaccountably to herself, made her heart sick, and at last burst from her lovely eyes in tears, as precious perhaps as innocence in distress ever yet shed. She felt ashamed, however, and soon recovered, but was plunged the whole morning in a reverie which did her no good, and which only escaped her father's observation from his being out

upon some county business, during the greatest part of the day.

Arrived at home, he was struck with the most serious concern, at observing a sadness on the brow of his loved girl, which he had never before witnessed. Two questions drew the whole from her; for not only were there no secrets between these two persons, so endeared both by relationship and love to each other, but Georgina felt a relief to her swollen heart, by instantly giving the confidence desired.

The trembling, or at least blushing interest she evidently took in Mrs. Neville's letter, confirmed as it was by Winter's communication, inspired the good Doctor indeed with a thought which did not occasion him less uneasiness, because it had never struck him before, or because it now sprang into his mind, accompanied with all the mortifying drawbacks which this story (now confirmed on all sides) presented to his belief. To think of it under either of the shapes presented, embarrassed him; but to think of it with the influence he began to fear it might have on his daughter's happiness, absolutely afflicted him. He became as serious as Georgina herself; and when they parted for the night, he resolved upon two things,—to ascertain the exact state of his daughter's heart, and to clear up, at any cost, the whole mystery that hung over Mrs. Rochford and her daughter, if her daughter she was. The

first he deferred for a proper opportunity, fully aware of all that delicacy and affection required of him; the last he determined to proceed upon without delay.

CHAP. XVI.

DECISION.

"This above all, to thine own self be true,
"And it must follow, as the night the day,
"Thou can'st not then be false to any man."

SHAKSPEARE.

And how did he proceed upon it?

In the very spirit of his character: for with that straightforwardness which belonged to him, having desired Georgina to give him Mrs. Neville's letter, he resolved to lay it at once before his friend, and to leave him to give his confidence upon it, or not, as he pleased.

This indeed was a very simple method, and (as many people will think) not at all worthy of a man of his abilities and endowments: it was what any child might have hit upon. But in fact, with all his

endowments, we are forced to confess that in simplicity of heart, at least, Evelyn was a child.

What he so promptly resolved he soon endeavoured to perform; for an opportunity arose the very next day, by a self-invitation to dinner, which Tremaine sent over in the morning to Evelyn Hall.

The Doctor determined in that very visit to sound him, and acquainted Georgina with his determination.

"And yet," said he, "I know not the right we have to force his confidence."

"None at all," said Georgina.

"It is material, however," continued he, "to settle it; for if there is a mistress in the case, the freedom of our intercourse will not be so proper."

"Certainly not," said Georgina, firmly.

Tremaine came with the *empressement* with which he had always come of late; lamented that he had been separated from them for so many days; and declared that he never liked absence so little, and had flown home with a pleasure he had seldom felt.

"I am at least glad of your resumed activity," said the Doctor: "your business however must have been important, to have taken you to York!"

"It was a little duty I had to perform," answered he, "and I trust neither of you will quarrel with me for having so well profited by the lessons you have given me. You see," and here he fixed his

eyes on Georgina, "I venture to suppose I have a mistress, as well as a master, in practical philosophy."

Mistress was a word which Georgina never liked so little; she looked grave and was silent.

"A mistress!" exclaimed Evelyn in a kind of ejaculation, half to himself, half aloud.

A constrained sort of pause ensued, in which Tremaine thought both his friends appeared to have something on their minds.

The dinner being over, and Georgina withdrawn, "Pray," said Evelyn, after a little thought, "is not a house in Somerville Wood, in which two ladies have come to reside, a late purchase of yours?"

"If you mean an old house, newly sashed at the end of the avenue," replied Tremaine with a good deal of surprise, "it is."

"You are acquainted I suppose with your tenants?" continued the Doctor.

"All good landlords ought to be," answered the catechist, with however increasing wonder. "But pray, may I ask in my turn, why these questions? Are you acquainted with them yourself?"

"My daughter has found them out," answered Evelyn.

"Found them out!"

"Yes! and introduced me to them, and a very scurvy reception they gave us."

"This is most extraordinary," said Tremaine, with evident signs of uneasiness.

Evelyn then proceeded to relate Georgina's adventure, and the impression which the younger lady had made upon her: "Now, I for my part, not having seen her, could not help admiring the elder, who says her name is Rochford."

"She is," said Tremaine, "a very superior woman; I have known her many years."

"We are, however," observed Evelyn, "anxious, particularly my daughter, to know the name of her young companion."

"And did not Mrs. Rochford tell you?" cried Tremaine.

"She was so exceedingly reserved," said Evelyn, "that Georgina did not dare to ask."

"Her name," replied Tremaine, recovering his tranquillity, "is Mélainie de Montauban."

"Foreign, I presume," observed Evelyn.

"One of her parents is French," returned Tremaine; and he said no more.

Another pause ensued, which lasted some minutes.

"My good friend," said the Doctor, "I meant not to be as impertinent as I fear I have been. The interest which these charming women have excited in my daughter has led me, I see, too far. I beseech you to excuse it. I certainly have no right to pry into secrets."

"I have no secrets," said Tremaine, and they again were silent. The Doctor had said enough for his friend to open if he would. It was friendship, not curiosity, that had made him speak, and finding the overture not taken, he changed the conversation.

At coffee, Tremaine was absent and Georgina constrained. Each seemed glad that Evelyn began to talk upon gardening, in which they allowed him to have all the talk to himself. Tremaine looked over some new music, and Georgina, at an open window, was busy with a rose-bush on the outside, which for the life of her she could not settle to her liking.

At length Tremaine took his leave.

The eyes of Georgina were immediately turned upon her father.

"I have not succeeded," said he, "except to discover that he has known Mrs. Rochford long, speaks highly of her, and that your young friend is half French."

"Half French!" cried Georgina.

"Yes! that is, one of her parents is of that nation, and she is Mélainie de Montauban."

"Oh! this *carissimo amico!*" thought Georgina. She looked again at her father.

"I know no more," said he. "I could not try to make a man speak of his own affairs, against his will."

"My dear father," replied Georgina, "you did as you always do, right."

"That is a very good creed for a daughter," observed Evelyn, assuming a playful aspect. He then kissed her, and, to drive away thought, proposed trying the new music; which finished the evening.

In the retirement of her chamber, Georgina taxed herself severely for the selfishness of her curiosity. "Should Mrs. Rochford be his mistress," said she, "what can that be to me, except indeed that such a man should so ill conduct himself? But Mrs. Rochford is not French, and Mélainie cannot therefore be his daughter!—May she not however be so by some French lady who, alive or dead, legitimately or illegitimately, may have been bound to him!"

This thought did not please. Could Mélainie herself be a mistress, and Mrs. Rochford her duenna? Impossible!—And yet why this mystery?—this seclusion?

This thought pleased still less.

Was Mélainie a wife?—fully as distressing! And yet why? There was then no dishonour; she must soon be acknowledged, and she may yet be my friend.

This reflection was consolatory, and she dwelt upon it. "I fear," thought she, "I have been sadly weak, and as selfish as weak. Mr. Tremaine is nothing to me: for his own sake, I hope there is no

impropriety of conduct, and his engaging wife I am sure I shall love."

Thus did a virtuous mind bring itself round; and thus a heart that placed its happiness in loving and being loved, righted itself, after a tumult that had threatened its tranquillity, by reposing upon what it was at least certain was good, although it might be the only good in the affair.

In this train of mind, after commending herself fervently to Heaven, this excellent young creature sank into slumber, which was sweet and refreshing, and Evelyn had the happiness of seeing her, next morning, placid and cheerful, if not with her usual gaiety, at the breakfast table.

The good Doctor, though much the greater reasoner of the two, and the better philosopher, had himself not been nearly so composed. As a divine, a good shepherd, and a friend, he feared for Tremaine. If either lady were a mistress, it was his duty to interpose; duty for his own and his daughter's sake, as well as Tremaine's. If Mélainie could be an object of seduction!—too horrible for thought! Yet the world, particularly the fine men in it, were so corrupt!—In St. James's-street it would be thought nothing of; and the French school almost enjoined it!—This however was soon dismissed. —That she might be designed for a wife was far more probable. There was an eccentricity, if not

a waywardness, in almost all Tremaine's actions, that made Mrs. Neville's report by no means incredible. "I must send him the substance of her letter," said Evelyn.

Full of the design, he closed the study door, after ordering a servant to get ready to go to Woodington; and wrote as follows to Tremaine:—

"You, who know all the rights and duties of friendship, will I am sure not quarrel with me for sending you the inclosed. Left to itself, I should think it the tattle of a silly, if not the malice of a wicked woman; but coloured as in some measure it is by time, person, and place, in all that belongs to the house in Somerville Wood, both the interest I take in my schoolfellow, friend, and neighbour, and my duty to her who is the prop and solace of my life, forbid me to be silent. When I tell you that my daughter has been eager to conciliate the friendship of the ladies your tenants, ever since she saw them, that she almost rests a part of her happiness on being permitted to cultivate the interesting Mélainie, your own rectitude will forgive my asking, as far as I may, some account of these ladies. That my friend is scandalized by Mrs Neville, and the reports of the neighbourhood, I have no doubt, and he perhaps might thank me for enabling him to put down scandal at once, by a frank explanation. My dear Tremaine will, however, distinctly understand, that ex-

planation at the expense of either feeling or confidence is not what I seek. My simple question is, as a father, to know whether Miss Evelyn may, without impropriety, give indulgence to the prepossessions and wishes with which her new neighbours have inspired her?"

This, and a copy of Mrs. Neville's communication, with the omission of that part which related to Georgina herself, were made into a packet by the Doctor, and despatched to Tremaine.

He was hurt and perplexed at the receipt of it, which he strove at first, though in vain, to attribute to an improper curiosity. But this, not only his natural candour, and respect for Evelyn forbade, but other sentiments towards Evelyn's daughter for ever banished from his mind. The delicate, the well-judging Georgina could never act from an impure motive; and it was evident, from her father's mode of putting it, that she in fact was interested to know the characters of persons whose acquaintance she had solicited, while all the fault and all the mischief rested with Mrs. Neville.

How often he gave that lady to the devil it is useless to inquire; how often he paced his chamber, and went in and out of doors, the better to consult his own thoughts, it is difficult to remember. It is sufficient to say, that having more than three several times begun a letter to the Doctor, for which he

detained his messenger, he at last sent the man away with a verbal compliment, that he would return an answer by a messenger of his own. The whole of the morning was past in writing, and indeed it was evening before a servant from Woodington delivered to Evelyn a packet, which we shall now set before our readers.

CHAP. XVII.

A PLAIN TALE.

" Speak it here;
" There's nothing I have done yet, o' my conscience,
" Deserves a corner."
" Noble lady,
" I am sorry my integrity should breed
" So deep suspicion."

SHAKSPEARE.

" To Dr. Evelyn.

" Those who know you can never suspect you of an improper motive: those who know your daughter, must be anxious to clear away every thing that may hang a cloud upon the least wish she can form. Her desire to cultivate Mélainie de Montauban, to seek her as a companion, to love her as a friend, is not

only natural, but does honour to her taste. I am mistaken, were it right that their acquaintance should proceed, if happiness to both would not be the result; but I doubt if at present their wishes can be gratified: and I feel constrained to think that Mrs. Rochford's decision is no more than proper. Accuse me not of mystery, any more than misconduct. At the same time I feel agonized that appearances should give such support to the most wicked of surmises. I know not who is most traduced, Mrs. Rochford, Mélainie, or myself. Little am I able to bear it on my own account; still less on theirs. Their purity I have sworn to defend. Is my own honour less dear to me?

"Evelyn, you know not my perplexity. I feel wounded more tenderly than perhaps you suspect; yet I dare not defend myself. With you, I might rest something upon confidence; but have I any right to that confidence from another?—that other, prejudiced as she may be by the surmises of an interested, a daring, and manœuvring woman? Can I be indifferent to my fame in a quarter which has so much of my respect? If I could bear the condemnation of the world, could I also bear that Miss Evelyn should think with that world? That world is saucy; it takes liberties with innocent women! Shall he, who can proclaim their innocence and his own, submit in silence?

"No! mere caution, which perhaps after all is unnecessary, shall not carry me so far. I depart then from my first resolution, and you shall hear a plain tale, which for ever must put to silence even appearances and surmises, much more positive slander. The friend, whose injunctions impose upon me the constraint I feel, would be the first, were he to know our dilemma, to release us from a burthen which he never foresaw would fall upon us.

"Have you ever heard me mention the name of Colonel Osmond? the preserver of my life, and, when I was in want of it, the benefactor of my fortune. Chivalry has scarcely painted a braver, a more generous, or a more delicate spirit. The latter he carries to an excess, which may one day bear hard on the happiness he deserves. Three great interests divide his heart; his country, his mistress, and his friend. His purse was mine, when I had none of my own; his sword was mine, when I had lost my own: he pushed my promotion; he defended my life. In the field of Vimeira, where my horse was killed under me, and while, entangled by the fall, a lance was already at my heart, this Osmond, at the expense of his own blood, saved mine. 'Twas the beginning of our friendship.

"When I left the army, we corresponded by letters. He was perpetually in adventures. Upon one of them now depends his happiness or misery for ever.

"You know how the events of war, which he seemed born to control, led the most gallant of mankind beyond the bounds of the Pyrenees. His advance, however, was tracked in slaughter, and on the plains of Vittoria Osmond was again doomed to bleed. He was, indeed, left for dead on that sanguinary field, and was only saved by an apparent enemy. He was conducted to the château of the Comte de Montauban, a French nobleman, established in Spain, where he was nursed, cherished, and recovered. That nursing, as it affected his peace, so it may for ever colour his fate; for Mélainie de Montauban was his principal attendant. Her mother, an English lady of a noble house, had long been dead, and she was allowed by her father to gratify her chief pleasure, in watching over one whom she almost considered as a countryman. She was then under fifteen. Whether her young heart was touched with more than benevolence towards a wounded and at one time a dying soldier, I know not; but his own was penetrated, first with gratitude, then with love.

"The Comte de Montauban was Bourbon in his mind, and not the less so from his English connection, and his respect for England. Colonel Osmond improved and wrought upon these dispositions. The Comte opened a correspondence with the King of France, and the cause promising success in the South, too little caution was used in veiling his design. He

was seized and shot by the savage Soult; his estates confiscated, his whole family ruined.

" Overwhelmed with the sudden reverse, Osmond beheld the wreck as if occasioned by himself; and he resolved to devote the life they had saved to the family whose kindness to him had been so fatal to themselves. The heir, a child of four or five years old, and the lovely, the touching, the orphan Mélainie, he conveyed to England.

" On the boy he settled a competent stipend : for the attracting Mélainie he had larger views. The boy has often seen me, and calls, perhaps thinks me, his father; but his sister I have scarcely permitted myself to know. In all that Colonel Osmond did he consulted me; and confided to me, as the best compensation he could make for the loss of her parent, the design of bestowing upon her his whole fortune, if at the same time he could have the happiness to persuade her to receive himself as her husband and protector for life.

" To this he was aware of all the difficulties that might be opposed; but he reduced them all to this single one—the uncertainty how far he might be able to inspire her with corresponding affection. She might be grateful indeed, but gratitude was a word he would not hear of. ' She must love,' said he, ' as if I were really and entirely her countryman; only her equal in fortune; suitable in powers of attraction,

in the qualities she expects, and even in age. Without this (little as I may pretend to it), I cannot be her husband, though I will always be her friend. At the same time to open this design to her at her tender age, would only be to take advantage of her inexperience, and her grateful feelings, with which her little heart absolutely runs over; for softened as it is by misfortune, and the loss of all whom she has been accustomed to love, she has no one to fix it upon but me. Oh! that that may last!"

"Reasoning in this manner, Osmond did not disguise to himself the difficulties he had also to contend with, from his personal absence on service at a time the most critical for his object. He was besides totally unprovided with a proper asylum for her, from having neither mother nor sister; and powerfully felt the necessity there was, that her education, as yet but half finished, should still be pursued.

"Consulted, confided in, by this high-minded man, my admired friend, my gallant preserver, could I be wanting to his views?—No! I entered into them. I was not unaware of the boldness of the expectation, that a girl of fifteen might be inspired with love for a man of thirty. But alas! my own age, and still romantic heart, made me hope at least that such a difference might be overcome.

" I desired him to consign both children to me. I swore to be the guardian of the friendless Mélainie, to watch over her safety, her improvement and her fame, with the vigilance of a father; and meantime I had the good fortune to associate Mrs. Rochford in my views. This lady, whom slander has never yet touched, I had remembered as the widow of an officer of rank, known both to me and to Osmond. The superiority of her talents, her sense, and her worth, added to the slender portion with which her husband had left her, pointed her out as designed almost by Providence for our object.

" I asked and obtained leave to confide to her the hopes, the romantic hopes of my friend. She readily and kindly undertook to second them, and what she undertook she has faithfully performed. After the first interviews with Mélainie, on yielding her to Mrs. Rochford, I made a point never to see her again: for, mindful of the tender, the sacred duty I had undertaken, I suggested to the latter lady the propriety of keeping her pupil in the most absolute retirement, and above all of secluding her, until my friend's return, from the society of men. Single, unengaged, and romantic myself, could I do this with such views, and permit my own visits?

" It is now near two years since this plan has been prosecuted. During the whole of that time, Colonel

Osmond has cultivated the mind, and I believe the affection of his young charge, by letters. He is expected every instant. No man has hitherto interfered with him; and we hope to obtain the only end we have proposed by delivering her up to him, at least free from all prepossession.

" Such is the outline of a story, on which malice, or wicked indifference to truth or falsehood, has built so much. Whether we may not have been too strict in declining for Mélainie the society of her own sex as well as our's, may be made a question; but Mrs. Rochford's fears that the one would certainly bring the other along with it, and her anxiety to fulfil her engagement with Colonel Osmond, who has been her very great benefactor, have made her scrupulously exact in adhering to her plan, and caused an apparent coldness to the overtures of the most amiable young creature that ever God made.

" To that excellent creature, and to her alone, I permit you to extend the confidence of this letter, and if it has satisfied you, I suppose I may have the pleasure of soon seeing you again."

CHAP. XVIII.

SATISFACTION.

" He is complete in feature and in mind,
" With all good grace, to grace a gentleman."

SHAKSPEARE.

" And what do you think of it?" said Evelyn to his daughter, who read over his shoulder.

" Think of it?" replied Georgina, with her eyes suffused, " that he is one of the noblest and most delicate of men!"

" I agree," said Evelyn, almost equally affected; " we have done him wrong."

" Oh! how much!" cried Georgina; and her eyes could not restrain a flow of tears, that were the signs of sweet remorse. They fell plentifully down her cheek, nor did her father seek to check them.

" My dear love," said Evelyn, " I cannot blame, I could almost join you;" and his own eyes caught the sympathy: " it is certain he is a very noble fellow!"

Georgina assented in a silence which lasted some minutes.

Recovering herself, " How I wish," she exclaimed, " for Colonel Osmond's arrival! I am sure I shall

like him: I think he need not be afraid of Mélainie."

"Why so?" asked the Doctor.

"He is so noble, so generous!"

"But he is above thirty!"

"If he were more, that would be nothing."

Evelyn gave his daughter a penetrating look, which called up a little colour to her cheeks. She however had no concealment, for she immediately added, "besides————" but consciousness perhaps would not let her go farther.

"Besides what?" asked Evelyn good-humouredly.

"He saved Mr. Tremaine's life," said Georgina.

"A very good reason why Mademoiselle de Montauban should marry him," returned the Doctor.

Georgina's confusion increased.

"We have injured our friend very much," pursued Evelyn.

"Terribly!" said Georgina.

"And I long to make him the *amende honorable*," concluded he, ringing the bell.

"How?"

"By riding over to him this instant, and begging his pardon."

His horse was soon at the door, and with himself soon after at Woodington, where the two friends embraced; and the Doctor did not return home till after a long conversation, in which amongst other

things that passed, it was resolved that Tremaine should influence Mrs. Rochford to relax in favour of Georgina (though of her alone), the strictness of her rule; and the tidings were conveyed that night to Georgina; a night which, on more accounts than one, she passed very differently from the last.

In truth Tremaine's explanations were not confined to Mélainie. There were other parts of Mrs. Neville's letter which filled him with indignation, and he expressed it in no measured terms. His expressions indeed were at first very general, but amounted to little short of execration.

"I observed your dislike to this lady at Lord Bellenden's," said Evelyn, "yet she seemed no common person, and not made for the churlishness you shewed her."

"My churlishness no doubt surprised you, and I am afraid Miss Evelyn too."

"It did: and I will fairly own to you we thought you capricious. I now believe I was wrong."

"You were indeed," said Tremaine: "and though I pretend not to justify churlishness to a woman in any case, you shall judge whether I could feel the friend of such a woman."

He then related all that has been related already of Mrs. Neville's manœuvres, and their detection, and then asked if Evelyn himself could be at all at his ease in her company?

"I think I could," said Evelyn.

"You are an absolute stoic, with your philosophy."

"Not in the least. I am rather Epicurean; for if I could be easy, it would be merely because the woman is not worth a thought."

"Yet she has power, influence, and, above all, the advantage of being plagued with no principle," said Tremaine.

"A mere managing mamma, with all her riches," replied his friend. "If you mind such things in the world, I begin not to be surprised that the world has such an effect upon you. What I *am* surprised at in a man of your experience, is the ease with which you were taken."

"I knew not her character," said Tremaine, "and I respected a mother anxious for her child."

"I believe," said Evelyn, shaking hands with him, and about to depart—"I believe you have an excellent heart."

"Can you do this," answered Tremaine, and he looked up as if hesitating to proceed, "when there are other parts of this she-devil's letter unexplained, which yet contain an express accusation, that I have used another young woman of birth and fashion, and, as the world say, of merit, shamefully ill?"

"Lady Gertrude Bellenden?" said Evelyn.

"The same."

"Why I there also observed something extraordinary in your conduct; and I thought it the more so, because she was not only beautiful, but fashion itself.

Tremaine coloured, but exclaimed, "How little do you, does any one, know me!"

"My dearest friend," said Evelyn, mildly, "do you know yourself?"

"Yes, enough to be certain of one thing, that beauty and fashion alone will never make a man happy: add to it, a cold selfishness, ignorance, and hardness of heart, and what would you think of it?"

"The answer is not difficult," said Evelyn.

"Then you have Lady Gertrude before you," observed Tremaine.

"Good Heavens!—the designed friend of my daughter?"

"It must be owned they are a little different," continued Tremaine—"light and darkness are not more opposite than the elements that compose them."

"Poor Lady Bellenden!" said Evelyn: "but are you sure this is not prejudice?"

"Judge for yourself," answered Tremaine; and he laid before Evelyn all he had been disposed to feel for Lady Gertrude—the experiments he had made of her mind and heart, and the result of those experiments.

"I cannot blame you," observed Evelyn.

"Then I am satisfied," said Tremaine; and the friends separated.

"This *Mr. Bevil* is a very extraordinary person," pursued Evelyn to his daughter, when he had communicated these particulars to her on his return home. "I think he is made for good if he choose, and we certainly have done him good."

"There *was* then something between him and Lady Gertrude," said Georgina.

"And does that move you?" asked her father.

"Only my curiosity," replied Georgina: "I certainly have been alive to it since I saw them together at Bellenden House."

"And what was your judgment?"

"That Lady Gertrude was not indifferent about him."

"Young ladies, I suppose, understand these matters; but how a girl of twenty could have any interest about a man of forty ———"

"My dear papa, he is but eight and thirty."

"To be sure," said Evelyn, "that makes a great difference; I had forgotten that."

Georgina blushed. Her father kissed her, and they separated for the night, each with their little anxieties, mixed with some sweetness, to which, with Georgina at least, the sweetness greatly predominated.

CHAP. XIX.

NAÏVETÉ.

" Oh! fair Katherine, if you will love me soundly,
" With your French heart, I will be glad to hear you
" Confess it brokenly with your English tongue."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE result of the adventure of Somerville Wood was for some time happy for Georgina, for she was allowed to cultivate Mélainie as much as she could wish; and often did she stroll with her, arm in arm, in the avenue leading to the cottage, with all the familiarity and confidence of an old friend. It was an intercourse very sweet to her heart, which expanded with a delight that was new to it.

It was equally so with Mélainie; who, no more than Georgina, had ever known a friend of her own age.

" It seems quite my country," said she, talking one day of England, " for I never knew France, where I was born, and all I ever loved best are English—you among them."

" Dear Mélainie," said Georgina, " but have a

care not to love so entirely without experience. How do you know I shall deserve it?"

"Do you not love me?" asked Mélainie, gravely.

"Oh, yes!"

"How then can I be wrong? Besides—Mr. Tremaine—"

"What of him?"

"He told Mrs. Rochford, before we saw you, that if Heaven had found a friend for me, whom he would wish me to love, and be like, it was you."

"Did Mr. Tremaine say this?" asked Georgina.

"Yes, and I am sure he was very right, for I feel as if I could like you better than any thing in the world."

"Not in the world," answered Georgina archly; "for you have undoubtedly as good, or better, and older friends."

"Yes!" said Mélainie, and sighed.

"Why that sigh?"

"I often sigh," replied the artless girl, "when I think of some of them."

"Is not that strange?" observed her companion; "especially if they are so good."

"Yes! indeed they are good! but they are far away."

"Are you thinking of your second father?" asked Georgina.

"I am thinking of Colonel Osmond," answered Mélainie; "but though he has been one to me, I do not like to call him father."

"And why not?" said Georgina, with more archness still.

"I would rather think of him as my brother," replied Miss de Montauban. "When I attended him in his terrible wound, I always thought him so. He was not at all like my father the Count—he was so gay and lively, even though sick: but when he got well, his spirits were like those of a youth—even of a French youth."

"Then he does not resemble his friend Mr. Tremaine?" said Georgina, with curiosity.

"He is not so severe, nor so sweet," returned Mélainie, not exactly appreciating her English; "but he is like him in his nobility."

Georgina, smiling at her language, could not help asking whether he resembled him in person?

"Ah! he is not so handsome, but much beautifuller."

"You love him?" said Georgina, smiling again.

"Most dearly!" replied the honest girl.

"Could you pass your life with him?" continued Georgina, hazarding more than she had at first intended.

"Too glad! but he is always at war."

Georgina would not push the matter farther, but thought that the fate of the high-spirited Osmond promised to be as happy as it deserved to be. From this she made a secret transition which she could not

account for, to the subject of disparity of years; and this left her with an opinion that, young as Mélainie was, she might be a happy, as well as what is called a lucky girl, in the love and protection of such a man as Osmond.

The question was soon decided, for within a fortnight of this conversation the Colonel actually arrived. He had leave but for a month, and we may suppose how he employed it. In effect, he became so entirely to his young ward the centre of all her interest, all her admiration, that all her affection followed of course; and *naïve* and ignorant of the world as she was, she was scarcely surprised, when Mrs. Rochford told her that he had come over on purpose to offer her his hand.

This episode does not require that the reader should be farther detained with it; though it was of consequence to Georgina, who lost her pretty friend almost as soon as she had found her. Imperious duty drove Osmond back to the armies, without having had time to do more than arrange preliminaries. It was settled that Mrs. Rochford and Mélainie should take up their abode at Brussels, to be more in his neighbourhood, and that he should seize the very first respite he could obtain, to fulfil his engagement. This was accordingly done, though it occasioned much sorrow to Georgina at parting. To Brussels Mrs. Rochford repaired with her charge,

and at Brussels the contemplated ceremony was only delayed, by that which delayed enterprizes of far greater pith and moment, though, to the parties, not of greater interest—the field of Waterloo.

CHAP. XX.

ANOTHER CHARGE AGAINST MR. TREMAINE.

"Leaving the fear of heaven on the left hand."

SHAKSPEARE.

GEORGINA was doomed yet to suffer considerable uneasiness, in regard to many things that related to the person who had now become the frequent object of her thoughts. In particular the surmises of her faithful and sober-minded waiting-maid, on the score of Tremaine's principles in religion, though not of much authority, yet, added to her own observation of his tenets in general, left her far from at rest.

Winter indeed had made a considerable mistake, of which she had stood convicted in the affair of the Somerville Wood ladies; and she was punished for it by a whole week's silence at her mistress's undressing. She had, therefore, for some time returned to the praises of Tremaine. Nevertheless, as she was a

godly woman in her way, and moreover considered Monsieur Dupuis as very first-rate authority, she could not help, if only for the good of his soul, and as an advance towards reform, relating to her mistress her suspicions, that Mr. Tremaine, in regard both to practice and doctrine, was not quite right.

After praising him, therefore, one day to the skies, for never inspecting Mrs. Watson's accounts, but trusting all to her honesty, "There is but one thing," she added, "against him; and pity it is in so nice a gentleman, so good to all pervided they don't teize him: do you know, Ma'am, he lets Mrs. Watson give away as much as she pleases:—she must have a nice place on it. But there is one thing which she and I both disapprove; and I said to her one day, I was sure you would do so too if you knew it."

"What can you possibly mean?" said Georgina, with displeasure. "I hope you don't make me the subject....."

"Oh dear! no, Ma'am: I am sure I never took the liberty of your name but that once, and then I am sure it slipped out I don't know how; I was so certain you would not like what Mrs. Watson said, ..."

"I must beg, Winter," replied Georgina, with more gravity than she had ever yet shewn, "that you will not make either me or Mr. Tremaine the subject

of your conversation with any body, and least of all with Watson."

"La! Ma'am," answered the waiting-woman, "I wonder why; for I pertest, both Watson and me think it the most naturalest thing in the world, you are both of you so good, only for that one thing."

"Well," said Georgina, "as you have talked about it—though I must beg you to mind what I have said, and never....."

"Oh dear no, Ma'am, never, you may rely upon it," interrupted Winter.

"Well, then," continued Georgina, good-humouredly, "what is your one thing?"

"He never goes to church, Ma'am," answered Winter.

"I am sorry for it," said Miss Evelyn, thoughtfully.

"That's what I said you would be," answered the waiting-maid, "and indeed, Ma'am, I am afraid from what Mr. Doopooy says, he has no notion of religion at all."

"Monsieur Dupuis," observed her mistress, "is no doubt a very excellent judge."

"Oh, as for that, Ma'am," rejoined Winter, who feared she might have gone too far, "I am sure I think he's no judge at all; for Mrs. Watson, who you know is a little bit of a methodist, shewed me the

most beautiful Bible I ever saw, which her master made her a present of the other day, and cost eight guineas."

"That does not look as if he did not care for it," thought Miss Evelyn, musing.

The waiting-maid went on: "I am sure that I don't believe a word that a Frenchman says. Only to be sure he never does go to church. Now if you and my master were to just talk to him a little——"

"Leave me, Winter," said Miss Evelyn, "I can do all the rest of my undressing myself."

The conversation, in fact, was going too far, and without knowing how to get out of it, the sense of propriety of this excellent young creature made her feel, without any reflection, the necessity for its termination. When alone, however, she began to think seriously of her waiting-maid's last hint.

"There cannot be a want of real religion," said she to herself, "in a mind of such principle; it must be merely some eccentricity, some mistake; and he is improved in every thing of late." She then resolved to take the first opportunity of the two friends being together, to turn the conversation on the subject.

It was not long wanting; and, strange to say, it grew out of a discussion on the Opera.

CHAP. XXI.

A DISSERTATION ON THE OPERA.

" 'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm,
" To make bad good, and good provoke to harm."

" I have seen the day
" That I have worn a visor, and could tell
" A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
" Such as would please."

SHAKSPEARE.

" For once or twice, or perhaps half a dozen times in a season," said Evelyn, " I should not much mind, perhaps I should like it; but to have a box for the whole winter, and never miss a night, I own it is too much for the virtue of any man or any woman."

" And yet you own you once were a votary," remarked Tremaine.

" I confess it," said Evelyn, " a votary to all that could sooth, dazzle, or exhilarate, in sound or sight; to all the attractions of soul-subduing elegance; in short, to all that art or luxury could devise, by which, after laying reason asleep, it could enchant, overpower, and I fear corrupt the mind."

" Corrupt the mind!" exclaimed Tremaine. " Is it possible the Opera can so offend?"

"Not if moderately taken. It is then only a very splendid fête, exciting much emotion, 'tis true, but not so much as may not be soon allayed. But if repeated so as to become a nightly want, all other (particularly the more rational) gratifications fall down before, and are absorbed by it; and whatever becomes of the virtue of your philosophers of fashion, I should tremble for mine."

"I am to understand then," said Tremaine laughing, "that men of fashion have more power to resist temptation than you country clergymen."

"Rather, that you are like the devils," answered Evelyn, "and are condemned to live in flames, which do not torture the less, because they are not annihilated."

"Who would have thought that you were so easily undermined?" asked Tremaine.

"I am so," replied Evelyn: "and the misery is that the Opera devotee, whether male or female, goes on, night after night, undermining and relaxing all the springs of virtuous or religious energy, without being conscious of the danger; and a character may be unsettled, or a soul lost, before any thing is known, but the effect."

"Perhaps that is the reason," rejoined Tremaine, "why the bishops never favour us with their presence."

"And a very good one, if it is," answered Evelyn.

"You will observe, however, I speak only of your thorough-paced Opera goer."

"What an epithet for a lover of the most elegant, the most fascinating of all amusements!" said Tremaine.

"It is that fascination, carried as it is to *excess*, with which I quarrel," replied his friend, "No, Sir, no: the Opera, to the senses, when daily taken, is like opium to the body—we are drunk without knowing it: nothing else will please, and yet it destroys. The stage is so set off with magnificence, that nothing simple afterwards can interest. Music seems to revel, as if Timotheus, or Apollo himself, directed. It 'takes the prison'd soul, and laps it in Elysium.' How can I, when nightly full of it, set about my devotions, or mere ordinary business, with common content?"

"I wonder you don't mention the dancing," said Tremaine.

"The worst of all," answered the moralist, "for here the utmost effort of art and ingenuity, under the most graceful, and therefore unsuspicious appearance, seems to be lavished on the poor tempted senses. Voluptuousness applies to them in every form, every motion, every sound; and it depends merely upon the scope of the fable, or design of the ballet, what we may be for the rest of the night, and perhaps the next day."

"Are our principles then so weak?" asked Tremaine.

"Our principles, if we have any," said Evelyn, "seem to be left with our money at the door: for the very air of the enchanted palace is infectious."

"The company at least are much obliged to you," retorted Tremaine.

"The company is as bad as any part of it," answered Evelyn.

"This is most extraordinary!"

"Not in the least. Pleasure, in its most gilded shape, pleasure without reflection, is the object of all. Dress, manners, conversation, ideas, are all shaped and directed according to its dictates. The natural character of every one seems to partake of what is going forward on the stage. Elegant voluptuousness takes possession; voluptuousness not thought dangerous, because so elegant. Hence affectation, flirtation, and assignation; hence the acting, both off and on the stage; hence the ruin of many a young mind, put out of humour with its every-day duties. In short, in the boxes, as well as on the boards, Circe, Comus, and Calypso seem to keep their court, and the enchanter actually for a time makes good the promise of his cup (more precious than nepenthe), that it will

> "Bathe the drooping senses in delight,
> "Beyond the bliss of dreams!"—

"This is very eloquent," said Tremaine, turning to Georgina, who listened the whole time with marked attention: "but I perceive you only wish to set this fair lady upon her guard, or perhaps, like a good rhetorician, merely try an experiment as to your powers, for or against a question."

"I assure you," said Evelyn, gravely, "I only speak my thoughts, which arose long ago out of severe examinations which I was forced to hold with myself on the subject."

"You found yourself undermined," observed Tremaine.

"Not so much undermined, as unfitted, by taking too much of it, for the more sober and important pursuits of life. You will observe I still confine myself to the case of its becoming an habitual *want*, as it did with me, and as it does with most. In that case, it is like gaming, which swallows up both passion and principle; and the gardens of Armida were not more enervating to the heroism of Rinaldo, than the Opera-house to the virtue and devotion of a christian."*

"Did ever any man alive, before this," exclaimed Tremaine, "attempt to mix virtue and christian devotion with the Opera?"

* The Doctor seems to have lived so long in the country as really to have grown a little rusty: for his feelings and his fears are those of a raw young man, educated by his grandmother, and seeing an opera during his first winter in London.—Ed.

Georgina laughed, and he continued: "Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay; hence I suppose a lady never wants an excuse for a smile; otherwise I would ask my fair friend what prompted her mirth?"

"To see how we may sometimes be misapprehended," answered she; "for it was because virtue and devotion could *never* mix with an Opera, that my father mentioned them."

"The lady understands me, as she always does," pursued Evelyn, half embracing her as he said it.

Tremaine envied that half embrace.

"Seriously, can you wonder," added Evelyn, "that not merely a clergyman, but any man not absolutely debauched by the world, or indifferent to what is to come, should lament the sort of corruption, that, 'mining all within,' under the name of pleasure, 'infects unseen!'"

"I deny both the corruption and the infection," answered Tremaine, "and never found the elegance you complain of do other than refine my taste, or soften my heart to all about me."

"To the singers and dancers I have no doubt it did," replied Evelyn, "as it did mine when a young man; and what young man is not liable to be softened by an Opera-girl? But will you tell me if it ever excited one virtuous emotion, one that was not even in some degree of a different complexion? If it

were only from the circumstance of the best Opera being always on the Saturday, the eve of the sabbath, I should quarrel with it."

"That is a sophistry I did not expect from so large a mind," said Tremaine, "for with so much true religion as such a teacher of it must have, what difference, in point of effect, can mere conventional forms produce?"

"Do you call then, the sabbath a form?" said Evelyn seriously.

"To a man sincerely and deeply imbued with the reality, as you are, I do," answered Tremaine.

"I did not know that had been your creed," said Evelyn, gravely; and Georgina, perceiving her wished for opportunity was already come, listened with all the eagerness of fixed attention.

"My good friend," observed Tremaine, "creeds are at all times, in my opinion, but bad things, since they only fetter the liberal mind, and produce misunderstandings by introducing points of controversy which in time become points of honour, and are unceasing causes of strife. *I* say my prayers in the fields; *you* in a church; yet we both pray to the same deity. I am most fervent in one week on a Saturday, in another on a Friday, you always on a Sunday: which is likely to be most spontaneous, and therefore most serious in devotion,—*you*, whose call is periodical, and the effect of mere institution

—or *I*, who listen alone to the immediate impulse of the heart?"

"There is no irreligion in this," thought Georgina.

"Go on," cried Evelyn, "I like this very well."

"I have done," said Tremaine. "I only meant to show that, true devotion not being confined to time or place, it is fallacious to reason against the indulgence of pleasure at one moment, because the next is set apart by a rule (and nothing else), to what is called a religious duty."

"That is," replied Evelyn, "you think there ought to be no sabbath; which, if we should be so obliging as to annihilate, there would be no harm in indulging on its eve in an amusement, which, I say, is wholly incompatible with its duties."

"Granting for a moment your consequence, *ex absurdo*, you have not proved this incompatibility," said Tremaine.

"I speak only from experience, the best of guides," answered Evelyn, "for at five and twenty I once passed every night of a whole winter at the Opera, and of course never missed on a Saturday; but the effect upon my feelings, and my sacred duties the next day, I have hardly yet ceased to lament as well as to remember."

"You were even then, I believe, in orders?" observed Tremaine.

"So much the stronger for the argument," replied

Evelyn; "for if I, with all the seriousness of my functions before me, could not sometimes, even in the pulpit, divest myself of the dazzling, the dissipated ideas which had filled me but a few hours before, how will those people act, particularly if young, with their passions and imaginations all awake, who have no peculiar sacredness thrown around them from profession, but conceive they are left pretty much to themselves on the point?"

"You either strain this matter too far," answered Tremaine, "or other people have not your vivid imagination. At any rate you recovered yourself."

"I did, but not at the Opera."

"Where then?"

"In seclusion, in lonely self-examination; for I obeyed the precept, 'commune with thine own heart in thy chamber.' I went afterwards to the Opera, but not frequently; *never* on a Saturday night; and was all the better for my change of habits."

The gravity of Evelyn's recollections here made him stop, and the conversation paused; nor did Tremaine think proper to continue the discussion of that part of the subject.

CHAP. XXII.

A DISSERTATION ON PRAYER AND GOING TO CHURCH.

" How he solicits Heaven himself best knows,
" For here we have no temple but the woods."

SHAKSPEARE.

Upon forms and ceremonies, no man was so strong as Tremaine; and the prejudice he felt against what *he* called prejudice was so great, that at the hazard of hurting, and even displeasing, not only his friend, but his friend's daughter, he reverted to what had fallen from Evelyn in respect to the sabbatical institution.

" Granting you a sabbath," said he, " I own you have defended this matter well; and I believe we must bring in a bill to transpose the Opera from Saturday to Friday."

" From your principle just elicited," answered Evelyn, " it would be rather more desirable I think to have a bill for the annihilation of Sunday itself; and I recollect your favourite philosopher, Voltaire, in his Country Priest's Catechism, while he conde-

scends to allow the people to say a few prayers on this day, computes that one hundred and fifty millions of livres a-year would be saved to the state, by only depriving it of its character of a day of rest.*

"You do him injustice," said Tremaine: "he only would make the labourers work as usual, when church is over, instead of going to the ale-house, to make themselves beasts."

"He has no right to assume they will do so," answered Evelyn: "in fact only a small part actually do so, and these few would be still less in number if their masters went to church."

"You would then make us go to church, merely that our servants may not get drunk?" observed Tremaine.

"How much do you assume in that *merely?*" replied Evelyn. "No! I would have you go, that you may not get drunk yourselves; drunk with irreligion, drunk with philosophy, which always begins by a lazy habit of neglecting the forms of our worship."

"Forms again!" cried Tremaine.

"My dear friend," said Evelyn, with emphasis as well as kindness, "this is a most important, yet surely a very clear subject. I only hope, and I do

* Diction. Philosoph.

it earnestly, that our difference is really about forms, and that you have not quitted the substance."

The good Doctor here grasped his hand with friendly fervour, and surveyed him with a penetrating eye.

"I cannot possibly have an objection to people saying their prayers," answered Tremaine.

"That's something," said his friend; "but why not then pray with them?—why not join in kindling one another's devotion?"

"You have hit a great part of my objection," replied the speculatist. "It is with that *kindling* I quarrel; for devotion, to be pure, ought to be spontaneous: if it depends upon others to be kindled, it is factitious. Hence I never could bear any stated hour of prayer, any ceremonial, any thing that I call mechanical, in a matter which must always be beyond the reach of mechanism. Nor can I be persuaded that he who, upon surveying the glory of the heavens, or feeling his heart swell with any great happiness, falls down in the fields or in his chamber, to pour out his mind in thanksgiving and adoration, is not more really devout than he who prays because he is just awake, or just going to sleep, or because the clock strikes ten. The real fervour of religion must surely be lighted up by feelings far removed from all cold dependencies upon time, or even place. Some places, indeed, may be found that inspire us,

sooner than others, with ideas of the more immediate presence of the Deity:—

> ‘ Presentiorem conspicimus Deum
> ‘ Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
> ‘ Clivosque præruptos sonantes
> ‘ Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem,
> ‘ Quam si repostus trabe sub citrea,
> ‘ Fulgeret auro, et Phidiaco manu.’ ”*

“ Beautiful !” exclaimed Evelyn, letting his love of poetry for a moment suspend his argument; “ thou almost persuadest me to turn savage and fly the tame scene ‘ where bell hath knolled to church.’ ”

“ I fear, however,” continued Tremaine, “ this feeling would not avail the generality, or give place any great advantage over time in this respect; for not only must we feel a portion of the Divine afflatus with which he who wrote these charming lines was inspired when he conceived them, but even with a warm imagination, the tame scene as you justly

* The classical reader (if I have one) will recollect the most beautiful of all modern odes, by Gray, to the Religio Loci of the Grande Chartreuse, whence this fragment is taken. Tremaine thus freely translated it afterwards, for Georgina.

“ We seem to behold the Deity more immediately present amid “ pathless rocks and savage fells, amid broken crags, in sounding “ waterfalls, and the darkness of the forest, than in a temple resplen- “ dent with cedar and gold, the work of Phidias.”

call it, (I mean our places of worship,) seldom or never can influence. A church, for example, possesses in this matter no advantage whatever over a private room."

"Where is your enthusiasm for times past, your love of ancient lore?" said Evelyn. "You have surely forgotten the most venerable, the most soul-inspiring of all things."

"I do not comprehend," cried Tremaine.

"My father means a Gothic cathedral," observed Georgina.

"I do," said Evelyn; "and defy any man who has fervour of any kind in his soul, to tread the pavement of an ancient abbey, amid arches, and aisles, and tombs, and not feel awed. Remember how even a man of wit and pleasure, who sparkled brightest among the sparklers of his time, was able to describe this." And then he burst out with his usual warmth :—

"'How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
'Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
'To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
'By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
'Looking tranquillity!'"*

"I allow all this," said Tremaine, "and have

* Congreve.

often felt both the sentiment and the beauty of these lines: nay such is the power of sympathy, that I have generally, on entering such a venerable pile, caught a portion of the flame of those (particularly in Catholic countries) whom I have seen sincerely at their devotions. But alas! . . . ." and he stopt.

"Oh! what can be coming?" thought Georgina.

"Proceed," said Evelyn.

"I have checked myself," continued Tremaine, "with the thought, that hands like my own, and mortals like myself, had framed and fashioned these witcheries, and therefore that all was false."

"False!" cried Evelyn; "what then is true?"

Georgina sighed, but the sigh was lost in what followed.

"I will tell you," said Tremaine;—"though I may reject, or rather not necessarily fix upon a church, as the fittest place for devotion, I reject not devotion itself."

"Good!" observed Evelyn.

"In the wild scenes of nature," continued Tremaine, "such as the Chartreuse, and even in a retired garden, or the depth of a forest, where I have sometimes wandered in lonely musing, I have (in my younger days,) vented my soul in prayer and thanksgiving."

Georgina's eyes absolutely glistened when she heard this, and Evelyn taking his hand, exclaimed

with pious affection, "You are not far from the kingdom of God; why then do you refuse coming to his house?"

"Why indeed!" said Georgina; "I am fully persuaded this is only one of Mr. Tremaine's odd theories; for if he feels so substantially right——" She paused, and a sort of sigh escaped from Tremaine; for he recollected that many years indeed had elapsed since the happy times he was describing, when his youthful bosom ran over with religion as a sentiment, without being clogged with any of those miserable embarrassments which the pride of reason had since interposed.

"I fear," said he, "you give me more credit than I deserve; if it be a credit to be grateful. But if you ask me why I think of religious forms and ceremonies as I do, it is simply because the fulness of devotion, where sincere, must be always such as to burst beyond all restraint, and reduce forms to mere acting and mummery. I see a set of good folks in their best clothes, all sauntering on a given day to a given place, with an assumed air of seriousness, though the instant before they may have been occupied in merriment or business. Is there any reason for this universal consentaneous movement? Yes! a summons from a particular bell, placed in a steeple! Well; the congregation arrive at the door: on one side the threshold all is still ordinary conversation: on the

other the holy fit comes on in a moment. Is it, can it be true, that this sudden change is real? and if not, what is it?"

"My good neighbour," replied Evelyn, "we are taking up this matter too partially, and your too eager feelings blind you. If those to whom you allude have left subjects of merriment or business immediately before they go to their prayers, so much the worse for them. But this was not the intention of the sabbath: and it would have been but good for their spiritual interest as well as comfort, if they had stolen a little time from their worldly concerns, in order the better to produce that frame of mind so necessary for the serious office."

"*Produce* that frame of mind!" exclaimed Tremaine.

"Aye, Sir! 'twas my word. For do we not know enough of the nature of emotion, or rather of association, to feel that almost any thing can be excited by laying the proper train?"

"If devotion be so excited," replied Tremaine, "it becomes artificial, and therefore hypocritical."

"I deny both the one and the other," said the Doctor. "Consider this matter," continued he. "You say yourself, that in the recess of a forest, lonely and musing, you have fallen down and worshipped. Explain to me, when you entered your retreat, were you in this frame of mind?—did you

leave your house under any peculiarly devout impression?"

"Perhaps not. I probably only set out on a common walk, but was filled by degrees with the contemplation of nature."

"Your devotion, then, possibly came on in consequence of an almost imperceptible pursuit of ideas, each following and each enlarging the other?"

"Very possibly."

"Tell me, then, do you think your piety was kindled by any immediate call from above—any supernatural visitation—or only the consequence of a serious frame of mind, generated in a natural manner?"

"Certainly the latter," said Tremaine.

"Answer again, before we finish," pursued Evelyn. "Were you not soothed and happier for your devotion? and could a wish at any time command the same moments, would you not indulge that wish?"

"I would give the world sometimes to renew them."

"The devotion, then, that springs from a wish to be devout, is not mechanical?"

"I should suppose not."

"'Tis quite enough," said the Socratic Doctor; "for the poor people you have sneered at, might be,

if they pleased, precisely in your situation in the forest."

"That I defy you to make out," observed Tremaine.

"And yet," rejoined Evelyn, "nothing is more simple; for I hold piety to be a natural attribute of man, and seated in his heart; although, together with every thing else belonging to that poor heart, it may be smothered, or bruised, or worn out, or covered with callosities, according to the character, fortune, or way of life of the wayward possessor."

"Your inference," said Tremaine.

"Why, that piety being in the heart, like a seed in the ground, it may always swell, and sprout, and fructify, according to the willingness and pains bestowed on its cultivation."

"Still I don't see the conclusion," pursued Tremaine.

"Merely that if common attention be paid to it, not in fits and starts, but at regular and stated times, —as you would weed and water your seed, without trusting it to chance,—it will interweave itself into your habit, will always be ready, and will even court your call."

"And then?"

"Why then it will always accompany you to church, if you only please to let it do so," said the Doctor.

Tremaine, though shaken, looked still unconvinced.

"You will oblige me," said he, "by explaining the potent incantation by which you would make this call: and at any rate, prove to me that it is not artificial."

"The process is however very inartificial, and in every one's power," returned Evelyn. "It is only a little to help, I had almost said not to disturb, the natural course of things."

"As how?" asked Tremaine.

"Not to go to the Opera on a Saturday night," answered the Doctor.

"It is amazing," continued he, perceiving that Tremaine paused upon his words, "to hear men (sincere, and well-meaning men too,) complain of their want of zeal, of their indifference and worldly mindedness; and yet to observe the pains they take to shut up every avenue by which devotion, if only left to itself, would pass into the heart. We prepare for divine service, as you say, by indulging in merriment, or business, or politics, to the very moment when the soul is to be poured forth in prayer. Those who have been at a great public entertainment the preceding night, canvass the actors, male and female, to the very church door; and I recollect a gay lady, who yet was constant with her family at morning church, open her pew to an acquaintance, asking

whether he would not come into her *box!* The merchant in the country goes to the post-office on the sabbath morning, discusses the price of stocks, and with his letters full in his head, perhaps in his very hand, walks to his church, yet wonders he is not devout. The politician in town does the same by all the Sunday papers. Yet if we do the contrary of all this, by only passing a little preparatory time in meditation, in looking over the sacred book or the collect of the day, or in private prayer, though nothing may be more sincere than the consequent devotion it kindles, it is called artificial. Now where is the difference, in this respect, between a zeal when in the church, which is the natural and sincere offspring of this concatenation, and yours in the forest, which was the production of mere preparatory ideas?"

"The difference," said Tremaine, "is, that the one comes spontaneously, the other is factitious."

"I care not how it comes," answered Evelyn, "provided it is real when it does come: and you yourself allow that if it would come at a wish, it would not be mechanical. Now when I open my Bible, or any devout book, or merely a serious moral essay—all which I have the will to do if I please—I *wish* for the consequences, and your associations in the wood immediately commence. The proper frame of mind, if it did not exist before, is thus generated by degrees; it is no more artificial than any other

frame of mind that flows from natural meditation; and hence it is in my power to wish, and be gratified in my wish. Upon this very subject, you will recollect what the wisest of all mortals, at least of all modern mortals, (for so I hold Lord Bacon to be) has observed in his beautiful prayer: 'I have sought thee in courts, fields, and gardens, but I have found thee in thy temples.' This has been well supposed to mean devotional exercise, with a view to cultivate and improve our piety, as we would cultivate and improve any thing else."

"How can piety, which you suppose *innate*," said Tremaine, "require this cultivation? How, therefore, be compared to any thing else?"

"Why not as well as taste, or any other quality seated in the soul, that is not a mere art or science? Hence therefore my unceasing wonder, that in an age in which there is at least much *talk* about religion, in which there is much real attention to the education of the poor, and in which good books multiply in every library, there should be a total neglect of the good old custom of our ancestors, who at night and morning joined in family prayer."

"I suppose," said Tremaine, "it is because you cannot prove the peculiar sacredness of any one particular hour, in which the holy temper is to be generated; why the morning or the evening should be

expected to call for prayers which the noon is to be without. A really grateful and liberal heart cannot be so fettered, and the Almighty might almost seem mocked, with such mere and palpable form."

"And yet nature, in prompting our duty at morn and eve, speaks to us more plainly than you seem to be aware of," said Evelyn.

"I know what you would say," replied Tremaine, "and you will tell me of Providence. This on the approach of night I can almost conceive, or at least can understand why it is believed. The evening comes on, we stand in need of sleep, which closing up our senses, all vigilance is suppressed, and we think we require peculiar protection. Who then shall keep watch for us, is a question which comes sensibly home to our thoughts at our lying down. Then comes cowardice, heightened by fancy, and we are glad to rely on a being who will take the post of our senses, and do that for us which we cannot do for ourselves. This is at least a comfortable supposition, and I am not surprised at nightly prayer; but what the same prayer has to do with our uprising, I own it baffles me to make out."

"As if he who rules the night does not also rule the day," said Evelyn: "or if we could take care of ourselves either by night or by day without him who watches every where, is every where, sees all

things, and governs all things. But, exclusive of this, is there nothing, after the interesting description you have given of our wants and our fears, for which we ought to thank him who has been our protector against both? Is there nothing new in which we are about to embark, and which claims equal protection, though perhaps of another kind? Your picture of a devout and grateful heart I like full well. But if we were all left, as we listed, to fall down in the fields or in our chambers, I am afraid few knees would bend. We should first postpone, then neglect, then be indifferent, and at last wicked; for, having offended God by defrauding him of his worship, our consciences would perpetually prick us. This would cause uneasiness; and we hate uneasiness: and rather than this, we should make the attempt to take refuge in infidelity, and soon come to have no religion at all."

"My difference with you," answered Tremaine, "is, that you leave us with no will in this matter, no independence, but all must pray at once, and finish at once, like the troops of a certain German Landgrave, at the word of command; and like them, if one be a little more devout than another, and so pray a minute or two longer, he is immediately caned for it."

The Doctor smiled.

"I will allow, if you please," pursued Tremaine, "that a church is not a bad thing with a view to enforce the devotion of the mob; but you will not

condescend to rest an abstract subject upon a mere particular argument."

"I of course speak only of the well-educated, the contemplative, the philosophic. A bishop, according to you, is even in his piety a mere machine!"

"According to what you *think* I call a machine, he is so."

"But the force of sympathy," answered Evelyn, "which, in a matter of feeling as well as reason, (and such I all along hold religion to be,) will always overpower every thing that reason, without feeling, may coldly attempt. Have we never heard of the beautiful line,

'And those that came to laugh, remain'd to pray?'

Get people then once to church, and give me but a few in a really devout mood, and I will answer for most of the rest."

"Oh! no doubt," replied Tremaine, "and be sure in your sympathies you forget not the influence of the bells, the music of England! I should be glad to follow your ingenuity in tracing the exact progress of kindling piety, as the tolling changes from almost merriment to gravity, and from gravity to devotion. There is first a deep chime, then a deep tolling, lastly, a little minute-bell, while the vicar is putting on his surplice: but this mummery rather moves the spleen than raises devotion."

"With all due respect for your powers of sar-

casm," rejoined Evelyn, "I see nothing to quarrel with in our bells. If only as signals for a community to assemble for the performance of a common duty, they are of use. Meeting you, however, on your own terms, I would say the associations which their sounds carry along with them, do, in effect, produce much of that influence which you endeavour to ridicule; and I defy any plain good man, who has religion in his heart, or even only in his imagination, to hear this invitation, without feeling a sort of magical sympathy, which will instantly render him serious, if not pious."

"I should be dissatisfied with such a sympathy, because it cannot, being artificial, lead to genuine results," said Tremaine.

"And yet you have often seen it do so, and felt it yourself," replied Evelyn.

"Never!" replied his friend. "Yes! perhaps when I was a boy, without experience, and, from being new to every thing, capable of appreciating nothing."

"Rather, I should say," replied Evelyn, "capable of appreciating every thing, from not having been sophisticated by any thing. But I meant not this," continued he, "when I said you had often felt it: for deeply have you felt it, in other sounds as well as those of a bell."

"In what?" asked Tremaine with curiosity.

"A bugle!" answered Evelyn.

"A bugle!"

"Yes! for give me leave to ask, if, in the campaigns you made in search of that experience which makes you so dissatisfied with every thing you *do* experience, you did not feel a glow, an eagerness of animation, whenever the bugle sounded, particularly if an enemy was near?"

"I did," said Tremaine.

"And why? Because of its concomitant ideas. You thought of the field in motion," continued Evelyn, "of battle joined, or about to join; of the 'plumed troop,' and every thing that you soldiers say can make ambition virtue! In short, your imagination conjured up

> 'The royal banner, and all quality,
> 'Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!'"

"You have hit the matter exactly," said Tremaine.

"Probably too," continued Evelyn, "the whole army partook of this generous ardour?"

"Nothing more likely."

"Then pray what is this association but the magical sympathy I talked of? And if all this arose simply upon hearing one sort of sound, why may not I, or any other serious man (soldiers too, in our way,) feel equally kindled at another?"

Tremaine was again silent; but it was no longer the silence of embarrassment, or of a man endeavouring to rally in an argument for victory. He felt convinced, and only hesitated as to the moment and the manner of shewing it. In the pause that ensued, he took several turns across the room, and at every turn eyed both his friends with softness and consciousness at the same time. Both were observing him; and in Georgina in particular he was struck with a look of interest he had not hitherto seen. It seemed as if her heart was enquiring of his, whether it were possible he could hold out against not merely the piety, but the force of reasoning of her father.

The thought determined, not indeed his reason, (*that* had been fairly convinced) but his conduct; and taking a hand of each of his companions, "My dear friends," said he, "it is in vain to push this any further. I own I have long argued for argument's sake: I am conquered, and am happy to be so."

He said this with the *air noble* that belonged to him, and that air, together with what it sprung from, went deep into the heart of Georgina.

"He has religion in his soul," said she, as she left the room, and retired to her own. There she walked in silent musing for some time, revolving all she had heard, and the struggle, and the yielding she had witnessed. Tired at length, but not of her subject, she sat down at her window. The day threw a quiet-

ness over the landscape she beheld from it; and the train of her ideas corresponded with that quietness. Love and admiration of her father, and joy at the candour, and recovery as she thought it of the man she admired, gave a softness to her soul, which she took no pains to interrupt. She continued long and pensive in her seat; and if ever happiness visited a mortal bosom, this innocent and pure creature felt it then.

On the other hand, Evelyn, however pleased with the candour with which Tremaine seemed to return from error to the right path, was concerned to find his eccentricities so much wider than he had ever supposed them. What he had acknowledged made him lament to suspect that more remained behind; and the recent discovery which he thought he had made of his daughter's partiality, produced a resolution that he would sift the whole matter to the bottom, the very first opportunity.

CHAP. XXIII.

A COUNTRY CHURCH.

"And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church."

SHAKSPEARE.

It was not long before this good friend, and good father, was furnished with an occasion to clear up all his doubts; and we are sorry to say, that his certainties made him even more unhappy than his suspicions.

From what small circumstances the greatest events have arisen, so as to colour, and even change the fate of nations, has been the theme of many a poet, historian and philosopher. That such is the course of things must be still more true in the little history of private life. A mistake of Dr. Juniper's housekeeper, in not properly apportioning the ingredients of his medicated gingerbread nuts, (the only form under which the Doctor could suffer medicine to be administered to him), and which mistake happened most critically on a Saturday,—occasioned an indisposition which lasted all the next day, and prevented him from performing the church service at Wooding-

ton; of which, be it remembered, he was the worthy Rector. It was the more unlucky, because the Doctor's curate, who kept a little school in the village, in which he wasted his spirits for eight precious hours a-day, having dismissed all his scholars to one of their periodical vacations, had asked and obtained leave of his chief to dismiss himself to that happy idleness, so sweet to those who have earned it, so burthensome to those who get it for nothing.

In a word the Doctor was ill; his curate was absent; there was nobody to officiate; the clerk was in dismay; the whole village alarmed; and the sexton had actually begun tolling the bell, without being certain that a message which Juniper had sent over to his brother Rector at Evelyn, for the loan of his curate, would be attended with success.

Conceive the delight of all the functionaries of Woodington parish, to say nothing of the 'Squire of Woodington himself, when Dr. Evelyn's post-chaise, with his fat long-tailed geldings and their round-sided driver, were seen to enter the Hall gates, from which it was but a walk across the garden to the church. Nearly all the congregation were already assembled.

Though Tremaine had little other communication with Juniper than that of mere civility, having in fact scarcely ever entered his parish church since his arrival, yet so great an event as a Rector's illness on

a Sunday morning, and during the absence of his curate, could not fail of being made known to him, as it was by the pious Watson, together with the means taken to obviate the difficulty. He was therefore more pleased than surprised to receive his visitors from Evelyn Hall; for both were as usual together. Evelyn had in fact, as soon as he received Juniper's message, resolved to attend himself, and leave his own parish for that one morning to his curate; in which, it must be owned, he was not without design; for he thought it might be a mean to tempt Tremaine to church; and once there, he trusted to his always high notion of the efficacy of public worship to produce some good, however small, to the balancing mind of his friend.

With this hope Evelyn furnished himself with what he thought would be an appropriate sermon for the pulpit at Woodington; not conceiving that Woodington's master could refuse his attendance. Nor in this last was he deceived; for to his own satisfaction, and Georgina's great pleasure, Tremaine offered instantly to escort them into the church; where the belfry seemed to be giving way under the redoubled strokes of the honest sexton above-mentioned,—who, at the entrance of so great a divine as Evelyn was every where considered, knolled in a sort of triumph, proportioned to the fears he had enter-

tained, lest there should be no divine at all. The whole church-yard too, which by this time was full, saluted the Squire and his well-known guests; and great was the elation of Mrs. Watson, and many her condescending nods and bows, exchanged with the better sort of her parish neighbours, smirking in their clean shirts, sabbath-day suits, and new-shaven beards, and thronging about her to notice the phenomenon of the Squire at church.

"Doctor be so ill, we thought there'd bin no service," said one. "I spy'd un first. I know heavy Solomon and his long tails half a mile off," said another. "I dare say a'll make a foin discourse," cried a third. "Meeting be quoit desarted," observed a fourth. "Yes, and old Mr. Barnabus is quoit haggled with it," exclaimed a fifth.

By this time the surplice bell was done, and Evelyn in the desk, turning over the leaves, and so great an attention had this little novelty, combined with their respect for him, excited among these simple people, that instead of the usual scraping of hobnails, a pin had been heard if it had fallen that morning in Woodington church.

Tremaine took his seat by Georgina in the Rector's pew; abandoning his own in the gallery above, hung all over with crimson cloth. Behind were seats of green baize, filled by his numerous domes-

tics—all save Monsieur Dupuis, who, under pretence of being a Catholic, denied himself utterly to all Mrs. Watson's intreaties, nay even her tears, to be present upon this occasion; which, some how or another, had assumed an air of peculiar solemnity.

Reader, I am perfectly aware to how much I have exposed myself, by entering into all these minutiæ, in a matter of such seemingly little moment, as a strange clergyman preaching in a country church. I shall perhaps be accused of twaddling, and reminded of the by-gone days of Sir Roger de Coverley. But the truth is, that this particular Sunday, and this very church attendance, were most critical in determining much of the fate of two very excellent persons, in a manner perhaps such as the reader does not expect; and I feel obliged to describe every thing that led to it. But even if it had not been so, I am not ashamed of my subject; which, whatever Lady Gertrude or Mr. Beaumont may think to the contrary, must ever be an interesting one to human nature, while the heart of that nature beats.

"If ever the poor man holds up his head," (says language better than mine,) "it is at church: if ever the rich man view him with respect, it is there; and both will be the better, and the public profited, the oftener they meet in a situation in which the consciousness of dignity in the one is tempered and miti-

gated, and the spirit of the other erected and confirmed." *

Despise not therefore the little anxieties which the chance of losing their service and their sermon had occasioned in the hearts of these plain, or, if you will, these uncouth people. Analyze those anxieties, and dissect those hearts, and your own will possibly not shew above them, even though you may be Right Honourable, and breathless perhaps from the favourable or unfavourable appearance of the House, on some night critical to the place, power and influence of those whom nothing but place, power and influence can excite.

Supposing that some of my readers have been to church, and supposing them to have one spark of religious feeling in their composition; or if that is too much, supposing what all would be affronted not to have supposed concerning them, that they possess what is called taste, imagination, a glow of thought and warmth of soul—why then they will at some time or another of their lives have been penetrated with the pathetic beauty of our Liturgy. It survives even the dull obtuseness of the hard-hearted machines, which sometimes are permitted, for our sins, to obscure and oppress it by their leaden deli-

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 56.

very. What must it have been in the mouth of one of kindred spirit with those who composed it?

Such a one was Evelyn. The impressiveness of his manner we have talked of in other things; but here he seemed inspired; though he was merely sincere in his feeling, and plain in his enunciation.

Tremaine never was so struck. With his imagination and warmth of feeling the reader indeed is acquainted, as well as with his endeavours to mar and stifle them, from the unhappy cast of his artificial life and studies;

"Vain wisdom all and false philosophy."

From this laudable impulse, he strove to check the rising feelings of nature; which, not a little aided by the sight of Georgina by his side, in the purest acts of devotion, as her father read on, grew almost too strong for him.

We grieve to say, the philosopher conquered, and the man of nature, after a struggle, was forced to yield; and though he felt all the sympathies upon which Evelyn had so well enlarged in their last conversation upon the subject; though he bent his knee, and even whispered out a hope that he might be enlightened, if really he was in error; yet he rose without his hope being heard; his pride of reasoning returned, and he forced himself to think, that there was no proof of the reasonableness of his feelings

beyond sympathy, and that that sympathy was weakness.

In this train of thought he was ill prepared for the sermon which followed; that sermon from which Evelyn, with honest confidence, had hoped such good effects.

The text was a solemn one.—"The foolish body hath said in his heart, there is no God." It went on, "Tush, they say, how should God perceive it; is there knowledge in the Most High?" "These are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession, and I said, then have I cleansed my heart in vain."

The discourse, such as might be expected from the preacher; the moral as well as the natural government of the world, by Him who created it: his competency; his willingness; the necessity for his interference; his actual interposition; in short, the whole proof of Providence, though by second causes; lastly the immortality of the soul, a future judgment, and the certainty of retribution;—all these formed the topics of the most impressive sermon to which Tremaine had ever listened. With whatever impression, not a word of it was lost.

In fact, it at least so far answered Evelyn's hope, that Tremaine's mind seemed filled with it; and after the congregation were dismissed, and his guests had accompanied him to the house, previous to their re-

turning home, far from doing the honours with his usual alacrity of attention, he became abstracted and silent, and with even Georgina still by his side, seemed to wish to be alone.

Evelyn observed this as well as his daughter, and partly hoping, partly believing the cause, and wishing him to ponder the momentous subject which he saw agitating him, took his leave at once, and remounting his substantial vehicle, returned home.

CHAP. XXIV.

CONFESSION.

MR. TREMAINE FORFEITS ALL PRETENSIONS TO FASHION.

"Oh! thou Eternal Mover of the Heavens,
"Look with an eye of pity on this wretch!"

SHAKSPEARE.

At home and alone, and the world once more shut out, the mind of Tremaine gave a loose to the serious train of thought which had now been generated. The subject had always been of the very first importance to his feelings, and he had always fled

from it as a matter he could not settle with himself, rather than as one he had already settled on the side which his fastidious doubts made him support.

The clear and decided opinions which Evelyn had promulgated from the pulpit, sat so naturally upon him as to give him the air and weight of an apostle. But from this very circumstance, such was the strange and tortuous cast of his understanding, that Tremaine set a guard upon himself, lest it should influence him improperly.

"Truth," he said, "might be disguised, but never demonstrated by air and manner. A kind of false honour, therefore, combined for a time with false notions, to produce the obstinate resistance he was inclined to make against his better feelings. He yielded, however, so far as to exclaim, "Oh, that this strong-minded man could be successful in convincing me! But adoration and thanksgiving are not prayer; and even a particular Providence, which is every where denied by experience, may exist in this life, without a life to come!"

Still his prejudices were so far beaten down, that he turned his eyes inwardly on himself, and was far, very far from easy with the scrutiny.

"I am myself an instance," said he, "of one of my friend's sagacious remarks, that left to ourselves as to duty, we shall first postpone, then neglect, and then renounce. Alas! that I could recall those happy

moments of gratitude to heaven, when in the morning of life all things promised gladness, and I was glad! Yet then I was poor, and my fate uncertain. Now that I am lord of this wide and beautiful domain, how changed, how hardened is my heart! Such, oh world! are thy spoiled children!—such the rewards of unceasing dissipation.

" ' For swinish gluttony
' Ne'er looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
' But with besotted, base ingratitude,
' Crams, and blasphemes his feeder.' "

He could not support his emotions, but rushing out of doors, and plunging into a dark and retired walk, taxed his heart with all the bitterness of remorse.

The walk led him insensibly to a spring, which his uncle, a contemplative man (the last possessor of Woodington), had nursed with great care. After winding under a very beautiful bank, it seemed to repose in a basin, which it was doubtful whether nature or art had prepared for it—so neat, yet so wild was its appearance. It here had all the clearness and all the stillness of an immense mirror; but on its margin art showed itself in a manner not to be mistaken: for not only some benches surrounded a well-kept turf, but the busts of several of the dead, the honour of England's piety, as well as her philo-

sophy, filled the eye with interest, and fixed its attention. They were of Bacon, Milton, Newton, Cudworth, and Locke; to which had been more recently added Clarke and Johnson. It was the joint work of the late Mr. Tremaine and of Evelyn, on whose grounds it bordered.

But the present master of Woodington knew very little of this possession of his; for he had visited it but once, and with that glazed apathy with which the state of his mind, when he first came down, made him visit every thing. He recollected, indeed, that when he saw these consecrated busts he had resolved to add those of Bolingbroke, Shaftesbury, and Voltaire, to the number; but the resolution had been laid aside, together with the remembrance of the place itself.

In his present frame of mind, his entrance into this assembly (for such it appeared), struck him as if he had viewed the gardens of Academus.

He fell into deep musing as he looked at these busts, and recognized the character and works of those they represented.

"They were great men," said he, "and certainly, as to intellect, the pride of their species. Alas! why cannot I think as they?"

He walked the border of the spring, in a sort of agitated pace, now looking up to heaven, now on the features of the departed sages.

" They were also," he added, " sincere in their opinions, and at the very least as wise, and a great deal more learned, than those who opposed them:— and he thought of Bolingbroke. " How then can I refuse to yield to such authority? Why is my soul so stiff? Oh! God, enlighten me, and touch my heart!"

At that moment he was a little surprised, but not ill-pleased, with the sight of his friend.

It has been observed that the spring and its ornaments had been in part the work of Evelyn, and that it bordered upon his grounds. This, and an entrance key, together with the beautiful retirement of the place, made it in fact more an object of enjoyment to Evelyn, than, as it happened, to the owner himself. Accordingly, it was here Evelyn frequently came to sooth himself in meditation, when meditation was his object; at which times he could dispense with the presence even of Georgina.

A single glance sufficed to shew Evelyn that the mind of his friend was by no means at ease. Indeed, we have but ill depicted him, if, with all his faults, the reader has not perceived long ago, that whatever was the opinion or the feeling uppermost, it was immediately to be read on his brow, or in his deportment. In fact, no child was less master of that useful and meritorious art, so necessary to all who set up to govern or lead mankind, but which had through

his whole career failed this eccentric gentleman,—namely, dissimulation. I think he could not therefore, even if he would, have concealed from Evelyn, that his reason and his feeling were at that moment in contention together.

To the Doctor's question whether any thing had happened to disturb him, he replied with frankness, and almost with eagerness—"Yes, a great deal." Rather misled by this eagerness, his friend proceeding to inquire what, he fairly told him—"Your sermon. I give you joy," he continued, "of your powers of argument and elucidation, of your rhetoric, your feeling, your piety, and eloquence. Would to God I could give you and myself as much joy of your powers of convincing!"

"Is that necessary to do you good?" asked Evelyn.

"It would make me a happier man," said Tremaine.

Evelyn perceived at once the fact, and the cause of the commotion his friend seemed to be in, and thought the time was come when he might lay open his principles, and examine his mind, as he wished.

He therefore probed him deeply, and the result was not happy. The authority of the ancient academies, and the perpetual undermining of the moderns; the pomp of Shaftesbury; the glitter of Bolingbroke; the speciousness of Hume; and the wit of Voltaire;

all these had, by being continually pondered, acquired a sort of mechanical ascendancy over this determined enemy of all mechanism; and he had habitually accustomed himself to think only of them, without considering the sacred book, or the immense authority on the other side. He knew indeed that these existed; he had formerly felt their force; but having, as he thought, chosen his creed, he had for some time purposely shunned them; and the yearnings which every now and then he could not prevent, he represented as the effect of mere early prejudice.

His disposition of mind, however, was at present any thing but proud. His heart was even softened. But it was a human heart; and inconceivable are the wanderings and turnings, the sudden emotions, kindled we know not by what power, and impelled we know not by what accidents, which move and direct, and melt or congeal, that wayward heart.

Evelyn could meet with no satisfaction. He found, he said, the mind of his friend in a heap of ruins. Atheism was the only evil opinion from which he was exempt. Deism, scarcely understood even by himself, and obscured by constant doubt; a poor opinion of human nature, scarcely distinguishing it from brute; a labyrinth of he knew not what notions, about a plan without any intelligible object, and a consequent necessity for order, the nature of which,

however, he could no where discover, but which sufficed to make him utterly *dis*-believe God's moral government of the world, and at least *not* believe in the certainty of a future judgment;—all these were tenets, or rather no tenets, which filled Evelyn's heart with horror. On the other hand, there was no assistance from authority or revealed religion—in which, if he did not utterly reject it, he had lost all confidence, and from which he derived no consolation.

In short, he was without even hope.

The effect of this in regard to any man, on the mind of Evelyn, may be conceived. But to see the man he loved, in many respects admired; one in whose mind so many good and even brilliant qualities met; one made for so much better things; and above all, one on whom his daughter might possibly—— the thought harrowed him.

With an agitation he could not conceal, and with even tears in his eyes, he grasped Tremaine's hand, and mournfully told him the distress into which the discovery had plunged him.

Tremaine, much moved, begged him not to despair for him. He confessed fairly that his mind was a wreck, but that he was himself aware of many sophisms; and that he was too uneasy under what he really hoped were delusions, not to hope that he might yet be enlightened. And he began, he said,

almost to believe that Evelyn had been given him as his friend, for that very purpose.

With a brow a little cheered, Evelyn again pressed his hand. "Such candour," said he, "deserves every assistance. Need I say, that all I have the power of rendering, my best services, my heart's warmest zeal, are yours?"

Tremaine assured him he knew they were, and told him at any rate not to conceive literally that he was a determined infidel, and careless and indifferent from being determined: but rather to look upon him as a philosophical searcher after truth, anxious and happy to find her wherever she might be.

Evelyn replied, that provided there were really no prejudices, he hoped the search might prove neither difficult, nor long.

"It will serve us many an hour," said Tremaine, "and will only knit us more closely together."

"Alas! my poor Georgina!" thought Evelyn.

It was then settled that they should lose no opportunity of discussing what was of such stupendous importance in the minds of both: the anxiety of Evelyn, however, being certainly not confined to the interests of one individual.

The multifarious, as well as absorbing interests which prevented these opportunities from arising, till all seemed hopeless and lost for all the parties concerned, will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. XXV.

MUTUAL CONFIDENCE.

"And I of ladies most deject and wretched
"Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
"Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune."

SHAKSPEARE.

The rest of the day was passed by both the friends in much seriousness. Tremaine shut himself up at Woodington, after having asked Evelyn to stay with him at dinner, and then retracted the invitation. He thought, he said, it would do him most good to be alone: to which Evelyn observed he would for once assent.

At his own table, though enlivened by Georgina, and Careless,—who had complained of having been lately as he said much *cut* by them,—Evelyn was himself remarkably thoughtful, and did not enter into Jack's gossip about the neighbourhood by any means as Jack wished, or, to own the truth, as Evelyn was himself frequently inclined to do.

"This Mounseer Melancholy" (for so he sometimes called Tremaine) "seems to have infected you

all," said Careless, after having in vain tried to bring out either the Doctor or his daughter into general conversation. "You used to like an account of a day's fishing, especially when I brought you the spoil, as I did to-day: a thing *he* never did in his life. However, my Becky is right about him after all," concluded Jack.

"In what?" asked Georgina, with some interest.

"Nay, you need not be touchy about it," returned the guest.

"Touchy!" said Georgina, with a degree more of whatever feeling she had shewn.

"Why, yes! touchy: for you will never now let me have a laugh at Woodington landlord; and the last time we talked of him, you quarrelled with me for calling him Mounseer Melancholy."

Georgina slightly blushed at perceiving her father was examining them both, and was relieved by his asking Jack what it was Mrs. Becky had said.

"Why you see," replied he, "I would hold my Becky's judgment against that of e'er a she in the county. She often gives *me* good advice, not merely as to pigs and poultry, but upon the world. She has seen a great deal of the world, you know."

He said this hesitatingly, as if to know whether Evelyn would agree with him.

"No doubt," replied the Doctor. "A sergeant of

militia's wife must necessarily know a great deal of the world, especially when she follows her husband to the wars. I think the West York has been all the way to Cornwall, and was full a year in Dover Castle."

"I think you are about quizzing me," replied Careless; "but if you were to hear Becky of a winter's evening, when she comes in to stir up my fire, and perhaps make my tea, while I am reading the York Herald, you would say she was no fool."

"But what is it she says of our neighbour?" asked Evelyn.

"Why after all, to use her own expression, that he is but a bingle bangle man, and that no good will come on him."

"I should be sorry to think that," said Georgina, yet still with something like consciousness, at seeing herself again observed by her father.

"Becky says," continued Careless, "he is one of them men that thinks us all in the wrong box, and that none but themselves can get us out of it."

"That is a deep observation of Mrs. Becky," said Evelyn.

"Is it not rather taking a liberty with a person so much her superior," observed Georgina, "and ought you to encourage it?"

"How can I prevent it?" returned Jack; "besides, it would hurt the poor creature sadly if I did not talk

to her now and then, and I should be as lonely and moping as the Squire himself. However, this is not all that Becky says."

"Pray edify us with the whole," cried the Doctor.

"I will, if you and Georgy won't snap me for it. She says no good will come on him in the way of matrimony, he has so many strange new-fangled notions; that he has used several young ladies very ill, by shilly shallowing; and hopes he is not playing the same game with you, my dear Georgy. So now the secret's out."

Spite of Georgina's knowledge of Jack's abruptness, and indeed her almost expectation, though without knowing why, of something similar to this allusion, she became sufficiently uncomfortable at the speech to feel embarrassed.

Her father interfered by observing, it was neither pleasant nor advantageous to have a young woman's name coupled with a gentleman's, and subject to comments from people who could know nothing about the matter.

"But they will do it," cried Jack, briskly, "and I could no more stop Becky....."

"Than yourself," observed Evelyn, with some gravity.

"I at least am in the wrong box I find," cried Careless; "but I couldn't help thinking I was right in putting you on your guard; for if any body, even

Squire Tremaine himself, was to use Georgy ill, I'll be....."

"Don't swear," said Evelyn, good-humouredly.

"Well, all I meant to say was, it should be the worse for him the longest day he had to live," concluded Jack.

"You are a true friend," said Georgina, stretching out her hand to him and smiling; "but indeed in this case there is no occasion to try your regard."

"I am sorry for it," blundered Careless.

"That's odd too," said Evelyn, "considering that it can only be proved in the way you talk of, by supposing your friend Georgy to be ill-used."

"Wrong again, I see," said Jack; "but what I mean is, that I am sorry there is nothing in it; for Squire is a fine man, and a rich, after all—that is, if Georgy could fancy him. But to say truth, I could wish something livelier for her. He is more suited to Lady Gertrude than my lass."

"Let us change the conversation," said Evelyn.

"I am dumb," exclaimed Careless.

When Jack had taken his leave—which he did that evening early, having promised, he said, the mother of his god-child, who lived a mile or two off, to hear how well he could say the Primer—Evelyn, at her own invitation, walked with Georgina to the rookery.

They were each to the other unaccountably silent.

The Doctor seemed much occupied with ascertaining when the colony would return to bed from their daily field excursions; and Georgina adopted the subject for a time, as if she thought no other was uppermost either with her father or herself.

At length, after playing a minute or two with his hand, she observed, "I think, Papa, you said you had had a long conference with Mr. Tremaine after church this morning?"

"I had indeed, my child," returned Evelyn "and may the good God bless the result!"

"It was then interesting?"

"To the very greatest degree; and if I admire, I pity our friend more and more."

"Pity!" exclaimed Georgina.

"I must pity," said her father, "a worthy and highly-gifted man, who is evidently unhappy."

"Unhappy! and from what cause?"

"From the sad riot which prejudice and too much liberty and indulgence have made with his mind."

"Can Mr. Tremaine be that sort of person?" asked Georgina.

"He can, and is. And yet I have hopes of him: his heart seems in the right place."

"It seems an excellent heart to those who understand it," observed Georgina.

"Are you one of them, my girl?" asked the Doc-

tor shrewdly. "Is it a heart you have at all studied, or in which you have at all an interest?"

"Studied! interest!" echoed Georgina: "Oh dear no! As your friend, and one you so often say yourself is fitted for better things,——and indeed he is very much improved of late——I say as one,—so fond of *you;* and I may add so kind and attentive to us both,——that is, as—"

"Proceed," continued Evelyn, seeing her still hesitate; "I am really anxious to know what you would say."

"I scarcely know myself," said Georgina, "and indeed, my dear Sir——"

"I won't be Sir'd" cried the Doctor.

"Well, then, my dear father, as one who certainly shews the greatest deference for *you*, and a sort of respect and kindness in his manner towards *me*, which I cannot describe, but which no other ever shewed ——"

"You have seen no other, my dear," interrupted Evelyn, "but our friend Jack, and Lord St. Clair: —and to be sure, lately, Mr. Beaumont, and Sir Marmaduke Crabtree."

"Oh! they cannot be named with him," exclaimed Georgina.

"And yet, except honest Jack, they are all men of fashion," returned her father.

"But not of feeling, of goodness, of delicacy," proceeded Miss Evelyn.

"I cry your mercy," exclaimed the Doctor; "I did not know you had been so well acquainted with these qualities in our world-hater."

"Oh,—he *hates* nobody—only dislikes impertinent people, and is good and delicate to all. Witness his friend Colonel Osmond, and Mélainie. And as for Lady Gertrude and Miss Neville, you yourself say you would have done as he did."

"He has at least an active defender in my good daughter," replied Evelyn; "and to that good daughter I must now seriously address myself, for I want to probe her little heart to the bottom."

It was well for Georgina that the evening sun had

"Stretched out all the hills,
"And now had dropt into the western bay;"

in short, that the shadows were thickening apace; for the suffusion of her cheek she would have sought in vain to conceal. Some scattered rooks returning before the rest, made a shew of diversion in her favour, and she too began to be curious about their motions; but recovering in a moment, and pressing her father's arm, she said with a subdued but clear voice, that she had not a thought she wished to conceal.

"There spoke my sweetest girl, my little confidant,

my own Georgy," said the Doctor, delighted. "You heard," continued he, "the half meanings brought by our friend Jack to-day, the gossip, no doubt, of Mrs. Becky, but also, no doubt, of his and our own village, and probably of Woodington itself. And I own, my love, I have many reasons, much as I like Tremaine, why I do not wish your names coupled together: at least not until two or three important points are cleared."

"May I know them?" asked Georgina.

"You have the most entire right to do so," replied her father. "In the first place, I know nothing of our neighbour's heart."

Georgina was silent.

"That he is fond of women's society, and naturally respectful, and even tender in his manner to them where he esteems, is clear. It is equally clear, (for how should it be otherwise?) that he esteems my sweet George."

These last words instantly dispelled all remains of embarrassment, if there were any, in the mind or manner of the young lady; for whenever her father used the phrase of "my sweet *George*," she knew that her always high favour with him was then at the highest.

"Still," added Evelyn, "I know nothing of the real working of a fine gentleman's mind; and however abrupt and obscure, and I will say unfounded,

our good Careless's declaration may be, about the ill usage of young ladies, still it cannot be disguised that he has paid attentions, impelled by his heart at the moment, which he has afterwards discontinued. I know it was his refinement that occasioned this, and I verily believe him the soul of honour; but whatever the cause, the effect upon the female has been the same."

"Do you think then," said Georgina, "that Lady Gertrude was capable of that sort of love to be hurt by his loss?"

"I do not," replied Evelyn, "but she may be angry on other accounts, and at any rate is the talk of the world."

"True," observed Georgina, lost in reflection.

"Still," pursued Evelyn, "I do not mean that it is even possible for him to use a woman ill."

"It is impossible," cried Georgina.

"I say I believe so," rejoined her father—"but spoiled children may be capricious, and the disparity between us in point of fortune—though that," added Evelyn, checking himself, "cannot be,"—and his own disinterested, delicate mind, spoke for his friend, and banished the thought for ever.

"There spoke my dear father," said Georgina.

"But then again," continued Evelyn, "there is another disparity, which I have no doubt would weigh

with him much, if it would not decide the thing against him with a mistress, supposing her to be young and lively as my little girl "

Georgina made no answer, and he went on to say, " All these things put together, have given me some painful doubts, even without another of a far more serious sort, as to the mind of this fastidious person; who, it is evident, would allow his heart to burst, if he were really in love, which I know not," continued Evelyn, " that he is..... ."

" I am sure, nor I," rejoined Georgina, perceiving that her father waited for her; at the same time a suppressed sigh escaped from her.

" He would allow it to burst I say," continued her father, " rather than marry, or offer to marry the person he most loved on earth, if he were not sure that he was loved for his own sake in return, whatever his faults, errors, or disparities."

" Can we blame him?" observed Georgina.

" No, indeed," replied Evelyn; " but all this bespeaks an uncertainty, which makes me, I own, tremble for my child."

" You must not, my dearest father: if I know myself, you need not."

" If!" said Evelyn.

" And why should I not?" asked Georgina, with firmness. " Has my heart usually so many concealments from *you*, much less from its mistress? Has

it ever played me double?—ever refused to answer when I have tasked it?"

"No indeed," said Evelyn. "You have ever been the truest, honestest being that ever father was blessed with; and may the Almighty Father of all bless you for ever for it!"

At these words he opened his arms, and Georgina threw herself into them, and wetted his cheek with tears as precious as virtuous feeling, joined to filial piety, ever shed.

Recovering themselves, they sat down on a bench which they had by this time reached. It was encircled by a thousand flowers, which, as well as the fresh grass of the adjoining field, seemed to emit peculiar sweetness: and the stillness and softness of the evening appeared such as they had never enjoyed before. But all this was in the mind; without which, properly attuned, neither flowers, nor fields, nor "grateful evening mild," will have any effect upon wayward man. "Tell me, then, my love," continued Evelyn, "for it is most fit I should know, how stands this dear heart towards this fascinating man—fascinating, with all errors?"

"Ah! those errors!" cried Georgina.

"What means my girl by this; and to what particular errors does she allude?"

"Alas!" replied Georgina, "I fear they are such as cannot be passed over. His little disgusts and

prejudices about the world; his refinements and fastidiousness; all these are nothing, or might be cured; or if not cured,' might yield to his excellent qualities, his honour, sincerity, and generous spirit, to say nothing of his genius and his taste."

"Has he all this?" said Evelyn, in a tone of scrutiny, as well as some anxiety.

"I have promised to be honest," observed Georgina.

"Be so, my love."

"Well then," proceeded Georgina, "to me he has all this, together with a manner and countenance, and altogether a *gentility*, such as his years can never extinguish."

"That is going very far," observed Evelyn, with the same anxiety.

"But with all this," continued she, "and with what would be ten thousand times more——"

"What is that?" asked Evelyn hastily.

"A conviction which I am very far indeed from having—that he loves me——"

"Proceed," said her father.

"Even with that conviction, and that he sought my heart to be cherished by his, never could I give it him, while I believed that he did not think of heaven as——"

"As what, my love?"

"As a man who sought your daughter ought," concluded Georgina.

It would not be easy to describe the pleasure that filled Evelyn's mind at this speech. What had passed, had rather painfully convinced him that his suspicions of her partiality were well-founded. He was at least not happy at the discovery, while so many uncertainties hung about Tremaine, the smallest of which was that which regarded his own state of heart. But the fear of his religious principles had weighed sorely upon this good father's mind. While they were even uncertain, to have seen an union between him and his daughter, was the thing on earth he would have most dreaded; and he foresaw nothing but the most anxious difficulty, for the first time growing out of the fate of the innocent, pure, and amiable Georgina.

To have to combat and thwart the child of his bosom, the being he most loved on earth, in an attachment which, if properly sought for, every thing connected with character, prudence, and honourable feeling, seemed to encourage, was the least part of his duty. To afflict such a creature in the tenderest point of her happiness—for the first time in his life to oppose a wish of his "sweet George"—that wish seemingly prompted by all that was natural, or that could be approved by the world,—this was what preyed upon him. Behold him in an instant relieved from all this, by the piety and firmness of the admirable creature herself.

No! no father ever felt so proud, so reasonably happy, so grateful! It was some time before he could speak.

At length, after pressing her to his bosom, he broke silence, and observed, "I always thought my darling Georgy might in every thing be left to her own unassisted nature; but I could little have hoped to be so anticipated in my anxiety about her! This was the last point in order, but by much the greatest in importance, to which I was coming; for unless this can be cleared to our satisfaction, never could I be happy in thinking that he loved you. Never would I consent to give my angel to an infidel."

"An infidel!" exclaimed Georgina. "Good Heaven! what horror! Indeed, Sir, you *must* be mistaken."

"I have my fears," answered Evelyn; "he at least embarrasses me cruelly: for the mischiefs I had apprehended are deeper than we either of us had imagined. That he has been a *hopeless* Deist, which is the very worst sort of infidel, is I fear too clear; at best, a poor shipwrecked being, tumbled and tossed by every wave."

"It is too shocking!" exclaimed Georgina.

"At the same time, more candour, more sincerity I never met with; and I am sure he aims at truth."

"May we not trust to this?" cried Georgina. "Surely your last conversation on prayer has dissi-

pated one error of the most serious kind: and I own I have thought of his ingenuousness ever since."

"There are monstrous ruins," answered Evelyn, "and all to be cleared away before any thing can be built up."

He then communicated to his daughter much of what had passed at the spring, and in particular the confessions he had made as to a scepticism as wide as it was distressing, although not bereft of all hope.

Georgina assured her father he need not be uneasy for her, as, however she might feel disposed to think of Tremaine's charm of manner and conversation, yet she had two anchors for the safety of her heart—her ignorance of the feelings of his,—without a certainty as to which, were he even perfection, she ran no danger; and the impossibility of her being touched by the vows of one so hardened as to deny the providence of Heaven.

Evelyn kissed her with an affection which even *he* had never shown before; and the relieved girl, though pensive for the rest of the evening, retired to very sweet slumbers, the reward and consequence of this tender confidence on the part of her father, and of the firmness as well as innocency of mind which had created it.

CHAP. XXVII.

CYNICAL.

" This is some fellow
" Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
" A saucy roughness."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE morning saw Georgina earlier than usual among her flowers,—to the consternation of Mrs. Margaret, who, going at the ordinary hour to help her mistress in dressing, found that she had performed all that little service for herself. She had already indeed descended to a parterre she was very fond of, which somehow or another exactly fronted the terrace and principal buildings of Woodington; and, with what reason we know not, Mrs. Margaret had long set it down to an interest about the master of Woodington, that Georgina was so often to be found viewing that fine place from her parterre.

At this moment, perhaps, she was not far wrong. The evening conversation (can it be wondered at?) had sunk deep in Georgina's heart. It was a heart she had promised to task upon the subject of this

very person. The sun shone full upon the extensive pile, which at that moment contained him; and the sashes and casements reflected its rays in dazzling flashes, almost as far as Evelyn Hall. Could he fail to be thought of?

But will it be believed by any one *how* he was thought of?—Not certainly by the mere sons and daughters of the world; nor is it to them I write. There are even very amiable and good people, who have no particular opportunity of thinking or acting for themselves, but who would think and act rightly if called upon, to whom Georgina's conduct may seem strange, certainly not common. Truth requires it to be told, that the first minutes of her rising were always dedicated to Heaven; and that on this particular morning, the preceding evening's conversation was so interwoven with her every thought, that Tremaine had a very large share of the prayers she poured out to that Power, which alone could enlighten his understanding or touch his heart. And never were purer prayers, and surely never was man more favoured than by having such an intercessor.

Now how will this appear, when related to the young women of Georgina's age, rank, and condition, who flutter in the world without an interval of self-examination, without one instant of retired seriousness, and, above all, without a thought or a care

as to the religious notions of those they call their lovers?

And yet attachments (or at least preferences are supposed to be felt, even in the overwhelming dissipations of a Town life; and at Almack's itself, and (though that is scarcely credible) even among exclusives; it is *possible* that some one heart may be just so far abstracted from the glare of self-sufficiency, and the love of general admiration, as to feel what for the moment may be called an interest about some other heart.

The thing, I allow, is extremely doubtful, being merely founded upon the fact that marriages have been sometimes actually made up between certain people of suitable rank, fortune, and connexions. Still, however, it *is* possible; and if so (for I must still put it hypothetically), let me ask what, even among these favoured beings, would be thought of Georgina, for the conduct that has been mentioned?

The answer will be, that as none of them ever prayed for themselves, or heard prayers at all, except at church, where decency compels them to go, the thing is totally out of their sphere—they cannot comprehend it. That they might respect Tremaine *while in town*, as a man of the first *monde*, a fine gentleman, whom it would be very convenient to encourage, they might allow;—but as to his religion,

it never occurred to them to inquire, nor was there the least occasion to be anxious about it. To pray for him therefore (if they knew how) would be totally out of the question.

And who is it that would say this?

Reader, you know and have seen them, and probably will start when you find they comprehend many of your acquaintance, and probably yourself. Many of them are persons to whom you even feel bound to pay all the attentions of the world; nay, some of them seemingly born to good, whom you really respect, and fancy you could love; but all, all are lost and confounded together, under one general uniform glare and glaze of manners, talk, dress, countenance, and conduct.

That this is the fate and character of the votaries of dissipation (that dreadful gulf which swallows up all innocency and confounds *all* character), let him deny if he can who has lived in the midst of it. If he seek truth, let him tell you the progress of his observation for a few short years at Almack's, the Drawing-room, or other assemblies. Let him begin with a young girl of fashion the first year of her presentation! all nature, dear unsophisticated nature, without a concealment, a design, or desire, or even a notion of appearing what she is not. Observe her bloom, her dazzling freshness, her mind, fresh as her cheek; her beaming eyes, her careless

ease, her unstudied grace!—View her the second: less easy, less open, more upon the watch, more studious of the graces of art, and already almost acting. At the end of the period I have prescribed, behold her again. She is already faded, and if not married, irritated at not being so; *laying herself out* for that admiration which before had spontaneously followed her; an actress consummate, full of commonplace, as well as affectation, in conversation almost blue, in face almost haggard.

Such, we have often heard Evelyn himself say, was the result of his observations, in his visits at intervals to town, on the effects of dissipation, and the all-confounding nature of a mere town life. To those who lead such a life, this conduct of Georgina will be utterly unintelligible.

Yet was she scarcely inferior to any of them, even in birth or worldly consideration. In beauty, manners, education, and accomplishments, she exceeded them as much as natural grace can exceed that which is taught. And yet she was but a country girl!

Let me however not blame the rich and great more than they deserve. Heaven knows they are more unfortunate than faulty. From leading a life totally artificial; from habits all fastidious; from the want of all interests which are the effects of personal exertion, to which (having every thing done for them) they are for ever strangers;—from all this, their facul-

ties can merely vegetate, and they would sicken and die of *ennui*, if they did not turn night into day. As it is, in the blaze of assemblies, where the most extravagant luxury courts them in vain to even the commonest emotion of goodness, if it were not for vanity, they would sink, as they often do sink, into mere lifeless automatons. But can vanity be always excited! and will not even this wear out? Alas! yes; or there would not be so much unreasonableness in the matter. Yes! vanity itself will expire, particularly if the votary is meant by nature for better things. And let such a votary, before the spring campaign is half over, but put these simple questions to him or herself—Am I happy?—Is this enjoyment (if enjoyment at all) more than merely mechanical?—Have I ever felt, under this oppressive radiance, this load of luxury, any one single generous or tender movement of nature? If the catechumen is candid, will not the answer make him feel self-condemned? and will not one walk "by a forest side or fountain"—one conversation (if ever he held one) with a daisied or primrosed bank, while his mind glanced from their lovely colours to the beneficent Power that created their loveliness to sooth and cheer him in his pilgrimage; will not this, I say, if he speak the truth, shew the utter inferiority of luxury in the production even of pleasure?

Observe, however, I speak this to those only who have *past* the four or five probationary years mentioned in the beginning of this chapter; in short, to those ladies and gentlemen who are no longer infants in the eye of the law, whatever they may be in that of common sense.

CHAP. XXVIII.

A DAUGHTER OF NATURE.

"Verona's summer hath not such a flower."

SHAKSPEARE.

The subject grew so serious in the last chapter, and prompted so many ideas bordering on personalities; so many Lady Janes, Lady Georginas, and Lady Katherines, seemingly born for dignity, or gentleness, or the sweetest, softest intelligence, yet marring all, either by indifference, impertinence, or an affectation of ungentle satire; so many of these diurnal and nocturnal spectres of quality rose up before me, all threatening war on my country girl,—which war could not fail to involve myself in unpleasant, perhaps fatal consequences,—that I really felt it most prudent to fly the whole chapter, and return in a new one from Willis's, and Cavendish, or any other square you please, to Georgina's flower-garden.

Observe, reader, how I have guarded myself by the explanation in the important words, "any other square you please;" for far be it from me to insinuate that the particular Lady Jane, or Georgina, or Katherine mentioned above, is to be found in that particular square. If she is, it is surely the most unlucky square in all the town, and I the most unlucky of all the moral philosophers that ever presumed to meddle with a sophisticated lady of quality.

Thank heaven, Georgina was any thing but sophisticated; and I present her to you in all the freshness and sensibility of her innocent mind, sucking the early morning air, with as much apparent pleasure and advantage as the flowers which surrounded her, and which in beauty in vain seemed to rival her.

Her beauty indeed was of that winning nature, that if a man by any chance but touched her handkerchief or her glove, much more her hand (if the glove was off), he was the happier for it the whole day long. At the same time she filled the heart with admiration of a much higher kind: for her goodness was so sincere, and of so soft a nature—there was such a gentleness in her animation, and every feeling she had was so founded in rectitude—that while the old seemed to vie with one another in approving, the admiration of the young was always tempered with a respect, which told them they honoured themselves in honouring her.

At the moment we speak of, she presented perhaps the most interesting spectacle the world could exhibit: —that of a young creature perfectly beautiful, and fully disposed by nature to encourage the most exquisite of our feelings, yet controlling all by a sense of piety to Heaven. That feeling always so sweet, though generally so imperceptible, which accompanies the agitation of an incipient passion; that dear delightful feeling so exquisite to the gentlest natures, which comes but once in our existence, and is therefore known by the name of first love; was, without her knowing it, about to take possession of her.

It cannot be disguised that her sentiments in regard to Tremaine, if all were well as to principle, wanted little to ripen into all that even *he* could have wished. It was not enthusiasm, nor the baby ravings of a mere girl; but it was a warm and rational interest, which might in time have amounted to rapture. It was in truth, founded in admiration of many parts of his character, and sufficiently in admiration of his person and manners to make her forget the disparity of their years. He was superior (how far!) to all the other men she had ever seen; even to the young Lord St. Clair, who had all but sought her. But in addition to this, his respect towards her was of that devoted kind which always makes its way into the heart of a young and feeling woman. He had even moulded himself anew, and in some things departed from what

seemed his very nature, in order to please her. Could he fail therefore, with his superiorities of other kinds, his mental attainments, his personal elegance, and, added to all, his proximity to her on all occasions, to impress a mind peculiarly open to such impressions? —No! from the first he had been no common person with her; she saw him loved by her father; what wonder if she *almost* loved him herself?

But all this was now about to yield (perhaps not without a struggle) to the pure feelings of devotion to her Maker, with which that Maker had imbued her.

Her father's caution, his fears and anxieties, his affection, his praises had encouraged and confirmed, but had not kindled her resolution: the decision was her own.

"Oh! help him, you sweet Heaven!"

was now her prayer, as much as ever it had been of Ophelia for that noble Hamlet, whose very name fills us with love for almost every quality that can inspire it.

To help and recover him from that "dreadful shipwreck," that "monstrous ruin," talked of by her father; to build the edifice anew (and how fair she thought it would be, if it could be effected), was now her prayer to heaven; and every turn she took among her flowers, and every look she gave towards Woodington, she breathed this prayer in all sincerity, fervour, and humility.

In this situation, and with these thoughts of Tremaine, what was her surprise, what her confusion, (may we not add her pleasure?) in perceiving at the other end of the walk, and advancing rapidly towards her, no other person than Tremaine himself!

CHAP. XXIX.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY DESCENDS A LITTLE.

"I will speak to him like a saucy lacquey."

SHAKSPEARE.

The emotions which Georgina had undergone on his account were not lost upon Tremaine when they met. They gave indeed a pensive tenderness to her features, which, gay and lively as they were, naturally expressed sweetness still more than gaiety. This to him was perfectly irresistible: but even if they had not expressed this, in the disposition of mind he was in, it would not have been easy for her to have looked other than peculiarly beautiful.

But I have a very long story to tell, before I can come up to the reasons for this; and as it is absolutely necessary for the elucidation of the fact, I must beg my reader's patience while I relate it.

Tremaine had passed the whole of the preceding day, after his conference with Evelyn, in a manner that was new to him. For the first hour indeed he threw himself into a chair at his library door, where he seemed immoveably lost in reflection, or to a cursory observer, occupied only with the contemplation of a sun-dial which rose a few yards off. His thoughts were profound, and his hopes lively; for they were founded in the confidence he now always reposed in Evelyn.

In proportion as this pleased him, (for it did please him) he felt his veneration and affection for that excellent friend increase; and somehow or another, he never experienced this sort of sensation towards the father, without its spreading in a glow all over his heart towards the daughter.

I once consulted an exclusive upon the reason of this; but she professed herself ignorant of the whole affair. Monsieur Dupuis, it is to be presumed, understood it as little, though, being a Frenchman, he was infinitely more knowing in matters of sentiment than any exclusive of them all.

Twice had this person opened the library-door, and twice presented himself to know if Monseigneur would not dress, but without being perceived.

Monseigneur was a name he frequently bestowed upon Tremaine to his face, and almost constantly among the servants: and going in a third time, he saw

Monseigneur resting with his elbow on the sun-dial, and his eyes upon heaven.

" Il est fou," said Dupuis to himself.

He however disclosed to him, that it only wanted " un petit quart-d'heure to dinner," and asked if he would not dress?

" N'importe," said Tremaine.

" Que diable!" answered Dupuis, loud enough to be heard.

" Allez-vous-en," rejoined his master.

Now though this was not said in a tone of anger, it was with just the air of a man utterly heedless of, and at best perfectly indifferent to, the person he spoke to. Monsieur Dupuis was offended.

" Il me compte pour rien!" said he, as he went, proceeding straight to the housekeeper's room, to complain of it.

" Soit fou, soit amoureux, il ne doit pas s'oublier vis-à-vis de moi," said Dupuis, entering the apartment.

Mrs. Watson protested she did not understand him.

" Il m'a manqué," cried Dupuis: for be it observed, whenever Monsieur Dupuis was greatly agitated, which he was upon this occasion, all the little English he had, failed him, and Watson was forced to endure whole tirades of French, before she could even guess what had happened.

"He mind me no more than Paillasse," cried Dupuis.

Watson, who was a woman of great simplicity, and little learned in English, much less in French, but withal a careful housekeeper, began to think of her beds, and wondered what strange comparison had got into the Frenchman's head.

"He mind me, I say," continued the valet, perceiving she did not understand him, "he mind me, I say (growing very red), no more dan de jack pudding."

"I suppose he no succeed wid de little Georgy," added the still irritated valet; "et cela ne m'étonne pas—I no astonished."

"What have you to do with Miss Evelyn?" asked Watson, drawing up with a degree of resentment.

There were indeed two or three points, in which her respect for Monsieur Dupuis' rank and situation in the family, mixed as it was with a little fear of him, always gave way to her own sense of dignity. One of these was the freedom of his remarks upon his master; and another, the familiar tone he sometimes used towards her favourite young lady, whom she never liked any body to call even Miss Georgy, but herself. But simple Georgy, and still more, little Georgy, always provoked her spirit of propriety to

assert itself, and she never heard it slip out, (as it sometimes did from Mrs. Margaret Winter, presuming upon having taken her from the nurse) without giving it a becoming reproof.

Indeed it was a little curious, and not at all unpleasing, to observe the sort of honour the good people of all degrees seemed to think they did themselves, in making use of this little affectionate diminutive of a name, not altogether common, and which some of them might have found a difficulty in pronouncing. They might indeed have called her Miss Evelyn, and wherever she was not known, such was her title: but this was among very few. Except therefore to those few, perhaps just come into the parish, it seemed a gratification, a sort of raising of themselves to a notice and protection they were proud of, to speak to or talk of her, as Miss Georgy. To have called her Miss Evelyn would have looked as if they had been out of the pale of favour, and deprived of a familiarity which was very sweet to them all.

"What have you to do with Miss Evelyn?" asked Watson with displeasure: "and where are your manners, that you do not call her by her proper name?"

"Beg-gar," replied the angry valet, "mes manières be as good as *your* master."

Now this was a certain sign that he was not only

very angry with Tremaine, but ready to quarrel with Watson herself: for on such occasions, by the stress he laid on the word *your*, he always by implication transferred the allegiance due to him as a master exclusively to Watson, and renounced it for himself.

"He is your master, as well as mine, I suppose," returned Watson.

"As he behave," cried the valet; "et pour la petite, là-bas, de little Georgy, I no astonish she no like him."

"I am sure you know nothing about the matter," observed the housekeeper, getting more and more angry.

"As much as you, and Madame la vieille fille, wid the cold name there; how you call her? Madame la Brumaire, and I say I no astonish dat de littel Miss she no like de old gentleman, when she get de young."

"If you mean my master," said Watson, struggling to keep her temper, and putting some dignity on the words "*my* master," for whom she felt all her own pride summoned, "he is not old; and as for the young gentleman, there is no such person, for I never heard of him."

"Dat no reason," replied the valet tauntingly, "and you better ask Madame la Brumaire."

"I am sure she does not know," said the housekeeper with some eagerness, yet by no means amount-

ing to confidence that she did not; "for if she knew, I should have known it myself."

"You no be sure of that," retorted the Frenchman, "besides, you no visit la grande Dame, miladi St. Clair."

"What of her?" asked Watson with some surprise, but changing to a tone of civility.

"A! ha! you ask me now," replied the Frenchman laughingly.

The laughing, and the sort of victory he thought he had attained in exciting the old lady's curiosity, and diverting her entirely from the defence of her master, put him in good-humour, and he was about to reveal to her the politics of the Mount St. Clair cabinet, which he said he had discovered from Madame Deville, old Lady St. Clair's own woman, and Monsieur Martin, my lord's own man,—when the dinner bell rang.

CHAP. XXX.

MORE OF THE LOWER CABINET.

" You know
" What great ones do, the less will prattle of."

SHAKSPEARE.

When Monsieur Dupuis joined his master, he was in consternation to find him sitting down, not to table, as he ought to have been, in the dining-room, but to a tray brought on a napkin to the library. He was still in his morning-dress, and pensive, amounting even to abstraction. His manner was absent, and the repast short.

To complete the Frenchman's astonishment, when the dessert was brought, he found the book he had chosen for his companion was the Bible.

" Le voilà absolument dévot," said the valet, as he took away the tray.

The incident was too remarkable not to be conveyed instantly to Madame la Concierge, who had invited him to take his coffee (for he despised tea) in her room. This she did from two motives; first to shew that she was in perfect good-humour with

him after their little fracas; next, because the hints he had dropt about the St. Clairs, and most particularly that Mrs. Margaret was in the secret, and concealed it from her, made it absolutely necessary she should know more.

" Le voilà absolument dévot !" said Dupuis.

But the difficulty was to explain the meaning of this to Mrs. Watson, who, even if she had understood the French language, could never be made to understand French manners; and as the whole was an enigma, except the word dévot, and Monsieur Dupuis could only explain that by the word methodist, his undertaking was not an easy one. In short, it ended in his assuring Mrs. Watson as a fact, without the trouble of reasoning, that Lord St. Clair was coming down to marry Miss Evelyn, who had in consequence refused the offered hand of her master, and that her master had in consequence turned methodist like herself.

The last intimation would have been a cordial to the heart of the good woman, could she have believed it; and she took occasion from the mere circumstance of its being possible, to give excellent advice to her light and licentious coadjutor, on the propriety of following his master's example. Far however from being won, Monsieur Dupuis asked her if she took him for one of the *canaille*, or if he looked like a man disappointed in love? He boasted that he and his master

were, in this respect, very different people, and announced his intention of taking another place. "Ici," said the Frenchman, "je m'ennuie à périr." Yet of the designs of Mount St. Clair she could make out little or nothing, except that old Lady St. Clair had confessed her wish to Madame Deville, her woman, that her son should marry; and that Miss Evelyn, of whom she had always been very fond, and was her relation, should be the object of his addresses.

Both the events however were, in the opinion of the pious Watson, not only within a contingency, but even a probability. The alliance had been the talk of the country till Tremaine came down; and in the midst of the conference on the report of the intended marriage, no less a person than Mrs. Margaret herself arrived to take part, and to confirm it.

"And yet," said Watson, "I shall be very sorry if this news is true. I love Miss Georgy so much, that I hoped she would have been my lady here; but Providence knows best."

"Indeed," observed Winter, "that's what I say; and as your master, Mrs. Watson, is so long about it, and St. Clair is quite as near to the Doctor as Woodington, and my lord so much younger, indeed so much upon the square as one may say with Miss Georgy as to age, and my old lady wishes it so much, and so very fond of her, and the house so gay, and all that —— why I think perhaps its best after all."

"But is it settled?" asked Mrs. Watson.

"I can't make out exactly," replied the virgin; "but to be sure it will be without a doubt:—no shilly-shallying there; and I know my mistress was very serious indeed all the morning after she got the old lady's letter; and I listened when she and the Doctor were together, but could hear nothing, only I'm sure they were talking about it; and to be sure there will be a large jointer, as indeed so there ought, considering all Evelyn will be her's, and a handsome fortin besides."

"You seem to have quite settled this matter," said Watson with some stiffness.

"La! settled! no! only what must be, must be, you know."

"True," said Watson with resignation, and began to meditate upon predestination.

The result of all this was, that Dupuis, finding his friend Monsieur Martin was arrived, and that it was a very fine evening, resolved to proceed to Mount St. Clair, as he said to *faire une reconnoissance;* for which purpose he gave his orders to Jonathan the groom to saddle one of his master's horses; an order which Jonathan did not dare to disobey.

The two housekeepers, after half an hour's walk towards Evelyn, separated; each of them resolved, that very night if possible, to sound the intentions and feelings of their respective chiefs.

CHAP. XXXI.

WHICH EVEN AN EXCLUSIVE MAY ALMOST UNDERSTAND.

" When I would pray and think, I think and pray
" To several subjects. Heav'n hath my empty words ;
" Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,
" Anchors on Isabel."

SHAKSPEARE.

STRANGE as it may seem, though the chances of executing their purpose were altogether in favour of Mrs. Winter, the good Watson was nearest success. Mrs. Margaret indeed consumed an unusual portion of time at her young lady's undressing; had every thing to pin and unpin, fold and unfold, as if she had suddenly become forgetful, lame, or awkward; relieving the delay, however, by an unusual portion of conversation, if conversation it could be called, where one of the parties alone seemed endowed with the gift of speech.

Georgina was in truth unusually silent, nay absent, and seemingly in no hurry to get to bed ; which made her the less sensible of her duenna's uncommon slowness, but at the same time less alive to the hints and

gossip with which she interlarded all the delays of the toilette. But though Mount St. Clair, and old Lady St. Clair's fondness for her young mistress, and the young peer's arrival in the country, as well as his fortune, accomplishments, and good person, were often mentioned, Mrs. Margaret could in fact get nothing out of Georgina,—who seemed wrapt in thought, till her attendant was forced, from having exhausted all pretences for farther loitering, to leave her for the night.

A sanguine, keen mind, however, is never at a loss; that sort of mind which is formed for great exertions and discoveries, and causes all the great things that happen in the world. This prolific mind is precisely the same, whether in a statesman, philosopher, or chamber-maid; only in the last it is bent, for the most part, on merely discovering the secret; in the others, on turning it to political account, or twisting every thing to an hypothesis; and this sort of mind to a certain extent did Mrs. Margaret possess.

She was quite sure, she said, that unless Miss Georgina had been thinking still of Lady St. Clair's letter, and that letter had contained the young lord's proposals, she would never have been so silent or so long in undressing. And this notion got such possession of her, that she would that very night have communicated her intelligence to her friend at Woodington, but that she was deterred by certain doubts and

difficulties as to writing and spelling; in which it must be owned her education had been lamentably deficient.

We have said that Watson succeeded better; and as far as communicating to her master the great design of the St. Clair family, she did so.

Tremaine had been pondering the most serious thoughts and arguments, upon the great subject which had engaged him that morning with Evelyn. Never had either his head or heart been so full. He felt, in regard to the present state of his mind on religious subjects, that there was a connection between himself and his neighbours, for which he could not exactly account, but which he also felt was of infinite importance to him.

This was the subject of his long reverie before dinner; and it was the recollection that Georgina could never be otherwise than piously grateful in a fine day, that drove him to the sun-dial. Here a thought struck him which led to long and deep reflection, in which the Bible became of the greatest consequence.

The dial, and its awful yet interesting accompaniments of all the wonders of the heavens, brought him, not indeed for the first time, nor as if it was new, but peculiarly and cogently in his then frame of mind, to the admission, or rather firm conviction, that there must be a power, invisible, in-

tangible, inaudible, unsearchable, yet Almighty, and always present, in us and about us; a power that, whether we were mere dust and worms, or allied to angels, was *able at least, if it pleased,* to direct and govern us.

Whatever became of free-will, or the theories in Tremaine's mind, in regard to "the order of things," —"a necessary system, distinct from moral good or evil——" this interference or influence, call it what you please, had become at least possible.

The point, as I observed, was not new; but somehow or other it had never before struck him so forcibly, or gone so direct into his heart. All this he attributed to the sermon of the morning, nor did he therefore feel it the less. Well, then, interference was possible; and why not therefore, said Tremaine, probable?

Because, answered his scepticism, there is no proof in history of such interference. The Bible, however, instantly flashed across him, as contradictory to that assertion. The whole sacred history uprose before him, consisting of nothing else but this interference.

The thought led him to profound reflection, and reflection to questions too interesting not to pursue, develop, and critically examine them in the only book where they are to be traced. Hence his occupation, even to absorption, with the Bible, which

had challenged so much remark from the sagacious Dupuis.

The lecture lasted as long as the light; and when that permitted it no longer, he stole out, with his mind full (we wish we could say satisfied), to arrange and digest his crowding ideas in the stillness which a walk, in a very still evening, presented, as if on purpose, to sooth his perturbed sense.

How different from the Tremaine of his youth, or even of his later years, when the hero of high life, in the assemblies of London or Paris, the champion of party, or the fastidious criticizer, yet devoted admirer of the sex, he sparkled through a whole night, amidst a blaze of artificial elegance, which, however flattering to his senses, never, as we have seen, satisfied his heart!

The reason for this, as some very homely persons have thought, was plain, namely, that God and nature were not there. But this is a reason I will never venture to give the world, for fear I myself should be driven out of it. Indeed, I once propounded those very words to Lady Gertrude, but she frankly told me she knew nothing about them; "For," said she, with a *naïveté* which, all exclusive as she was, she was not altogether without, "are 'God and nature' necessary in any part of London?" I drew in; for I love a dear, elegant votary of artificial life from my soul. There is

something so heroically insolent in an exclusive; such a noble conviction of his or her superiority over all the rest of the human race; such a philosophic independence of every thing which people of mere nature look to for happiness; that I own I view them with a degree of awe and veneration. There is besides much real power of mind, in resisting, as they do, all that wealth, pomp, luxury and taste can effect, to please the eye, ear and palate; all which an exclusive views, after the first acquaintance with them, without a single emotion; and this, I say, is so philosophically stoical, especially among mere young or fashionable people, that, in point of self-command, it beats the Zenos and Catos of antiquity all to nothing.

I confess, therefore, I do not recommend Mr. Tremaine, in the gloomy recesses of his avenue, pondering the attributes of the Creator, and the awful subject of the Divine government of the world, either to the notice or favour of his former companions; still less as an object of envy,—for, far from being satisfied, he was still tossed in a sea of doubt. All that was certain was that he had become much of a renegado from his former feelings and prejudices—had parted with much of his fastidiousness, and was comparatively humble.

In this situation, and as the reader may think in a fair way of realizing the prognostics of that very

superior person, Monsieur Dupuis, (whom indeed Mrs. Neville herself pronounced to be far beyond his master in all the requisites for a philosopher or a fine gentleman,) he was met by his housekeeper.

Tremaine's respect for her, as an attached old domestic, never allowed of these meetings without a word of notice or kindness: which, indeed, was the cause of much of that kindness she bore for him in return.

"You have had a pleasant walk, Watson," said Tremaine, "and probably from Evelyn Hall?"

"Only part of the way, Sir," replied Watson.

"I heard voices at the end of the avenue; was any body with you?"

"Only Mr. Dupuis, Sir, and Mr. Martin, Lord St. Clair's valet."

"Lord St. Clair! is he in the country?"

"He came this morning, and——and there is the strangest report——" said Watson.

"Of what?"

"Has not your honour heard?"

"How should I?"

"I thought," replied Watson, hesitatingly, yet encouraged by this disposition to let her talk—— "I thought from your honour's intimacy with Doctor and Miss Evelyn——"

"Good God!" exclaimed Tremaine, with palpable eagerness, and it must be confessed, most unfashion-

ably, if not unaccountably, off his guard, considering to whom he was speaking—" Good God! what can you mean?"

Mrs. Watson was not the most penetrating person in the world; but a woman who had been less so might have made, or thought she had made, a great discovery as to her object, by the mode in which her master uttered this exclamation. I say as to her object; because there were a hundred different senses in which this very common exclamation might have been taken. It might have been curiosity;—indeed, ninety-nine out of a hundred would have set it down to that account. It might have been surprise, or fear, or concern, or the mere ordinary interest of a friend, or the selfish interest on what might affect one's own situation as a neighbour. It might also, it must be confessed, be the sensibility of a lover; and so Mrs. Watson construed it, for so she wished it to be.

" Good God!" exclaimed Tremaine, " what can you mean?"

" Nay, Sir, nothing I believe is settled."

" Settled! who? what? where?—tell me this instant."

" I thought your honour might have known," answered the straight-forward domestic, " that my Lord was coming a courting like, as one may say, to Miss Evelyn."

A thunderbolt at his feet could not have struck Tremaine with more surprise, or created more alarm, than this sudden communication, the ground for which he did not at all think it necessary to examine, but immediately set it all down as true.

I remember in a former chapter I asked the reader if ever he had been in love. If he has, it will not be necessary to explain this; if not, I will not throw away my time by endeavouring to explain it to a critic who would be as invulnerable as Mr. Sergeant B—.

Every body knew the late Mr. Sergeant B—. He had the best power of criticism that the most exact and accurate vision could confer. He never deviated from his path, never looked to the right or left. If then he sometimes disported himself in the sweet fields of fancy, it was always under the correction of this sound and sober judgment. Once he was engaged with a young gentleman of rather warmer feelings, but as it will appear, much less penetration than the sergeant, on the merits of Richardson and Clarissa Harlowe.

"He was an ignorant man," said the sergeant.

"Surely, Sir," replied the young gentleman, (who I conclude was one of his pupils,) "he understood the human heart, and its most engaging as well as powerful passion, love; and no where are the varie-

ties and changeful feelings of that passion so accurately described as in Clarissa."

"Accuracy!" said the sergeant; "foolish boy! do you remember her will?"

"Not particularly."

"I thought so: go read it again, and you will find that not one of the uses or trusts therein mentioned can be supported: one would suppose he had never seen a conveyance in all his life!"

Now the sergeant B—s who read this may probably think the credulity described in Tremaine extremely unnatural, and may wonder, may even throw aside the book, because a man of his age and experience should have known no better than to believe at once this gossip of his housekeeper, without making a word of inquiry as to whether or not it had any foundation.

To rescue him and myself from this imputation, I must inform these critics, whoever they may be, that probably he did not inquire for proof, because proof was immediately tendered without being asked for; though I fear it will not much mend the matter, when it is stated what sort of proof this was. But it is my business to *tell* a story, not to *make* one.

"Mr. Martin and Mrs. Winter say it is all true," pursued Watson.

"True!" exclaimed her perturbed master. "Then

farewell——" but recollecting whom he was speaking to, he recovered himself.

"Good night to you, Watson," said he; which was a civil way of dismissing her; and he instantly bent his own steps towards Evelyn's house.

It was now the time that Milton talks of—

> "By then the chewing flocks
> "Had ta'en their supper on the sav'ry herb,
> "Of knot-grass dew besprent."

The freshness of the grass and the mild evening air struck on his sense, as he hurried through the park; and his deer, who were at their night browze, scarcely fled at his approach.

"These are the scents and sights she loves," said Tremaine to himself; "but if she marry St. Clair, she will not have them to love. She will be buried in London, or, at most, at Brighton, all the year; and the only country she'll know will be the road between them."

"Is it possible it can be?" continued he, hurrying his steps. "What a fool, not to ask Watson the nature of her authority!" He stopt.

"And yet it is very possible," added he, proceeding. "He is young, handsome, noble, and rich, and so far he is made for her."

The thought preyed upon him, and he quickened his pace till he almost ran.

"But what is he else?" continued Tremaine; and he stopt again, clasping his hands.

"Has he any one of her tastes? any one of her opinions? has he *any* tastes or *any* opinions? can he value or even understand her mind? can he give her a heart equal to her's? has he any heart to give? No: she may not be made for—for *me*," said Tremaine, "but was she made for *him?*"

Thus raved Tremaine (for it was raving); and the end of this soliloquy brought him within half a mile of the spot which contained the subject of it. How different his present musing from that which had absorbed the last hours! Of all the qualities that belong to the mind, surely its versatility is the most remarkable. The immortality of the soul, the interference of Providence, the law, and the prophets, all were forgotten in an instant, and his whole heart, mind, and memory were fixed, absolutely riveted, upon one little being, in comparison with whom all that was, or had ever been in the world, seemed nothing.

In this frame of thought he arrived at the end of that long walk of elms which we have described as leading up to Evelyn's house, before he had scarcely asked himself why he had proceeded thither.

It was time at least to do so; for what he had to say, or how to announce himself when he arrived, he had by no means settled.

"As they have not mentioned it to me themselves, it will be thought impertinent to come at this late hour, or indeed at any hour," said Tremaine, "to force a confidence which is evidently premature. Besides, am I prepared—have I any right to expect, or believe—can I even hope, if it is even not too late?"

These reflections again arrested his progress, and he threw himself upon one of Evelyn's seats, whence he could observe the lights which gleamed from almost all the windows of the house not yet closed for the night, and which, though only carried by the servants traversing the different rooms in their usual household occupations, created ten thousand fancies to his possessed imagination, the least of which was that St. Clair and his mother were already there, perhaps to remain the night. In the midst of the melancholy and brooding caused by this, a spaniel which belonged to Georgina, and of which she was very fond, (feeding it herself, and making it the constant companion of her walks,) strayed from the house, night-hunting, and coming near Tremaine, soon made him out. He was indeed himself very fond of this little animal, delighting to stroke and caress her; for which Georgina had more than once repaid him with a look worth a kingdom.

"Good Heavens!" cried Tremaine—"Flora!"

The dog instantly recognizing his voice, leaped on

his knees, wagging her tail with every demonstration of joy; and upon being patted on the head, licked his hand, and searching for the bend of his arm, (a trick which she was particularly fond of,) placed her head in it, and seemed to compose herself to rest.

This little incident, in his then disposition of mind, totally unmanned our metaphysician and man of refinement; and let Lady Katherine or Lady Georgina laugh at him as they please, his eyes were actually suffused with what at another time would have made him heartily ashamed.

Reader, I again ask, wast thou ever in love?

CHAP. XXXII.

IRRESOLUTION.

"What man art thou, that thus bescreen'd in night,
"So stumblest on my counsel?"

SHAKSPEARE.

WHETHER the reader of this history has been in love or not, he will readily admit that at the end of the last chapter we left Mr. Tremaine in a very fair way of emulating any hero of romance on record. And yet he was found the next morning in his own bed!

The truth is, he and the dog remained in the same position we have described for full half an hour; during which the former revolved many plans and resolutions. He would go in and ask an audience of Evelyn—perhaps of his daughter herself. He would at least ask if the news he had heard were true. He would, perhaps, as a mere friend, caution Georgina not to throw away her fine mind and natural tastes upon a man whom it would be his duty, in the aforesaid character of friend, to represent to her as what he was—originally, a man of much pretension, but dwindled down into a good-natured dandy. Perhaps he would throw himself at her feet, and ask if the eternal love and admiration of a heart fully capable of appreciating her's, and twenty thousand a year to boot, could make up for twenty years' difference of age. No; he would not mention this last; for it would be to wrong, it would be treason against his dear Georgina, to suppose she could be influenced by such a thing. Besides, it would wrong his own pride in its very tenderest point; and he blushed at having, for the single instant it flashed across him, entertained so grovelling a thought.

But pray a truce with your perhaps, and be good enough to let us know what Mr. Tremaine *did* do in the emergency in which you left him?—Alas! for dear romance—he got quietly up from his seat, and walked home again.

In fact, the poor gentleman was disturbed in his council of plans, before he had time to decide upon any one of them; for the house being now shut up for the night, and Georgina missing her dog, the servants were sent in quest of her; and a footman coming up the walk, calling Flora, the little animal, being herself wholly free from the passion that agitated Tremaine, and at the same time not at all disposed to pass the night under a tree, when there was her own comfortable basket in Georgina's dressing-room, courting her repose, sprang from his arms at the sound of the footman's voice, and in a few minutes gave herself up to the care of Mrs. Margaret.

Tremaine being thus interrupted before he had time to come to a decision upon any of his plans, and being moreover really apprehensive of the strange appearance it would have, should he be discovered at that time of night so close to his friend's house, he, as I said before, very quietly got up and walked home; as any tolerably prudent man would have done, under similar circumstances.

On his return he found the house in some wonder at his absence. The hall was full of lights, the great door open, and up and down the broad walk before it appeared the figures of the two coadjutors in domestic power, the authors of all his perturbation—dame Watson and the respectable Dupuis.

The good woman was in effect in real anxiety

about her master, especially as she had sagacity enough to have observed that the news she had told him had been received with any thing but composure; and as the great clock had now long struck midnight, fears of accident, if not of something worse, began to haunt her imagination; and as she really loved her master, her perturbation was unfeigned.

Dupuis, who loved him too (about as much as a minister, who by means of a party has forced himself into power against inclination, loves the person of his king), had played with the poor woman's fears to his own no small amusement, and indeed self-admiration; for every surmise on his master's absence, in which he was not at all sparing, had all the effect he could propose or wish, upon the housekeeper's fears.

"He in a fit," said Dupuis; "he tumble down de cascade! he drown himself for love! he go kill de milord in de duel!"

The climax was more than she could bear, and the well-intentioned housekeeper was really in agony, when her master appeared.

"Oh, Sir!" she exclaimed, "you have so frightened us! I am so glad to see you safe!"

"I frightened out of my wits," cried Dupuis.

"At what?" said Tremaine, abruptly; then desiring Watson to bring one of the lamps into the dining-room, he executed the resolve he had made on

his way home, to question her as to the authority of her report; a conduct which our readers may wonder he had not adopted long before.

Being now, then, rather more collected, and interested in a very keen cross-examination, and withal having no very skilful person to deal with in the art of disguising truth (to which we always desire to add neither was she inclined), he soon found that in effect he had very little reason to be sure that a proposal on the part of Lord St. Clair was ever resolved upon; still less that it had been made; least of all that it had been accepted.

And yet, for all this, Tremaine felt by no means safe.

CHAP. XXXIII.

INTRIGUES OF THE LOWER HOUSE.

"But marriage is a matter of more worth
"Than to be dealt in by attorneyship."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE history of the thing was this; only part of which, however, was known to Watson herself. Old Lady St. Clair, who was a very harmless, affable,

easy woman, had passed the last seven years of her widowhood much abstracted from the world, and the last year of it, from infirmity, almost entirely in the society of Madame Deville,—who united in herself the capacities of companion and waiting gentlewoman. It was on this account perhaps that her lady was in the habit, as most such old ladies are, (and as poor human nature sometimes requires from us) of unburthening herself of her thoughts, whatever they may be, to the said Madame Deville, or indeed to any one near her whom she might think a friend. A visit from her son, once or twice in a year, for a week or so at a time, and a very few periodical visits from a few scattered dowagers like herself, who inhabited a circle of some eight or ten miles in diameter, gave her the only chances she had of seeing any one out of the precincts of her own domain. Now and then indeed she was enlivened by Georgina, whom she loved, and her father, who was her kinsman, and often her adviser. But for the rest, Madame Deville was the sole depositary of her confidence, such as it was. This, and novel reading, washing her china, polishing India cabinets, and now and then a course over her garden in a Bath chair, with Deville by her side, formed her life; not an unhappy one, for she had no hankering beyond it.

In this seclusion she cultivated the only worldly

plan she had left,—that of her son's marriage: and it must be confessed, a person of far greater means and opportunities might have fallen on a worse scheme for him than she did, when she fixed her choice, could it be realized, upon Georgina.

Of course Deville was her confidant in this, as in every thing else; and every visit made by Georgina, by developing something new to love, only confirmed the wishes of the good old lady. Many were the letters she wrote, or rather dictated on it, to her son, (for her infirmity often made that task devolve upon Deville,) in which the worldly advantages of the match were not forgotten. And to say truth, the whole proposal was not thrown away; for the young peer, besides having no indisposition to either Georgina's person or fortune, was in a very eminent degree tired of himself.

Of this the following letter may be an illustration.

"White's, November 20th, 1814.

"Dear Mother,

"I received all your six last letters on the old subject; but what with shooting, politics, and a number of other odd things, I had no time to answer them. All I can say is, I have no objection to be married, for I assure you I have no affair on my hands, and assure you I have long been heartily tired of Pauline

But you know it is cursedly troublesome, besides being quizzical, to go what is called a courting; and as I told Lady Gertrude, I'd be hanged if I would dance after her any more, and I really think Miss Evelyn, with a winter in town, might do. I've no objection to your making up the match for me if you can. But I really cannot come myself, as I really am engaged to go to Melton to hunt, so believe me

"Your affectionate son,

"St. Clair."

"P.S. Mrs. Neville writes word that Tremaine is always at the Doctor's, and that there was no truth that he was married to the French girl. As he is a devilish odd fellow at flirtation, though so old, and is at any rate devilish rich, you had better take care of him. Now don't say any more I don't attend to things, as I give you this caution."

Whether the good dowager was most pleased or displeased with this letter, is uncertain. She was certainly pleased with the *carte blanche* it gave her; but in the end she informed her son that Miss Evelyn was not a girl to be had for asking by a third person, and that it was absolutely necessary, to ensure success, that he should come himself.

All this passed under the notice, and indeed through the hands of Deville, who in fact was both

zealous and sincere in her exertions to second her old lady's design; for she was actuated by a very great sense of duty and attachment to her patroness, and not in the least (as she most strenuously asserted herself) by a conditional promise of being remembered to double the amount of a legacy which she knew stood at present against her name in that lady's will.

To prove her attachment however to her mistress, (we will say nothing about the legacy,) and wanting assistance in other quarters, she opened a correspondence with Mr. Martin, to give her regular intelligence of the young lord's feelings and conduct as to others, as far as he could discover them; and moreover, as she shrewdly suspected that Mr. Tremaine's intimacy at Evelyn Hall might at all events affect the case, Mr. Martin was also instructed to sound Monsieur Dupuis upon this occasion. One link was still farther wanting,—namely, a proper confidant at Evelyn Hall; and as, among the males there, there were none, according to Mr. Martin, but cloddies, Mrs. Margaret was the only person that could be looked to, and she could only be got at through Mrs. Watson.

Hence the whole concatenation.

Watson of course could give little of all these motives to Tremaine; and we have merely revealed them to the reader now, because it seems a more

proper place than any other in this history. But the facts, with such glosses as they had received in passing from one to the other, Watson willingly disclosed in answer to Tremaine's questions; who, after all, gathered thus far and no farther,—that Lady St. Clair and her son were desirous of the alliance, could it be brought about. And though, as far as the opinions of all these good gentlemen and ladies went, not only had the match been proposed, but approved, still it amounted to opinion merely.

Nevertheless, it kept Tremaine awake the whole night; and he left his bed at early morning, resolved to seek out Georgina and her father immediately, and at least open the subject, to whatever conclusion it might lead.

Thus have we accounted, in the most satisfactory manner, for that early meeting of Tremaine and Georgina in the garden at Evelyn Hall, which has been recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter of this eventful history.

CHAP. XXXIV.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL PROBABLY BE DISAPPOINTED.

" In her youth
" There is a prone and speechless dialect,
" Such as moves men. Besides, she hath a prosperous art,
" When she will play with reason and discourse,
" And well she can persuade."

SHAKSPEARE.

I NEVER could make out what it was that detained the Doctor so long when Tremaine called upon him thus early in the morning, so that he had to seek his young hostess, because there was no host to receive him. It is certain he did not feel sorely mortified at the task put upon him, or rather, which he had put upon himself, of seeking the Doctor in the garden, taking the chance of what he should find there besides.

And if he found there the fairest flower of that garden, in the person of its mistress—the flower which in all the world he most sought for, and most wished to wear—breathing all its sweets, and seemingly in the happiest state for his purpose—if he did this,—why Mr. Tremaine, as many a hero of

romance had been before him, was a very fortunate man.

Georgina complimented him upon his early rising, and would have rallied him upon his improvement in this point, but that rallying him just then upon any thing was the farthest from her thoughts. She had besides been so little accustomed to be alone with him, that her first impulse was to look around for her father, and her next, to ask Tremaine whether he had seen him, and where he had left him?

To her surprise she found that he was seeking him in that very walk, of which, from being newly made, and the production of their united taste, he knew they were very fond.

It had indeed every thing to delight and to sooth every faculty and feeling of the mind, and invited to contemplation as much as it courted the senses. It was what is called a green walk, shaven so close and so frequently, that no velvet was softer to the feet. It was perfectly straight, so that a thoughtful person might pace up and down, indulging whatever reverie he might be in, without danger of being interrupted by a false step. It was sheltered from observation on the garden side, by a long row of espaliers of the finest fruit; while on the other it was bounded by a retired mead, which no profane person ever visited. From this it was only divided by a quickset hedge,

kept very trim, but purposely low, in order to open the full view of the park and towers of Woodington. It was at present in a perfect blaze of glory with roses, Indian pinks, convolvolus, and poppy, interspersed every where with a profusion of mignonette. At one end was a summer-house, in which Evelyn delighted to take his evening tea; at the other, separated by a rustic gate, was the rookery, which has already been honourably mentioned. The sun was now high, and to avoid the glare of his beams, Georgina and her companion entered the summer-house.

And here, reader, no doubt thou expectest that declaration and that acceptance of love, which, in closing this history, would put an end to thy trouble and to mine at once.

But in point of fact, though Tremaine rose from his bed with great courage, and was resolved to put the report about Lord St. Clair, and perhaps even his own fate, out of doubt that very morning, and though no recess that ever lover sought for a declaration, (the old gentleman away, the young lady alone, and full of kind thoughts of him) presented so fair an opportunity to resolution, or even to bashfulness, —notwithstanding all this, my determination to tell only what I know obliges me to add, that both the gentleman and the lady, almost immediately on their

entering the above-named summer-house, fell into neither more nor less than a dissertation on the delights and uses of a garden!

Whether it was that Tremaine thought it most prudent to introduce the chief topic of his visit to Evelyn alone; or that Georgina, still full of her morning thoughts, wished to make her garden subject a vehicle for other sentiments, in which she hoped rather than expected Tremaine would agree with her;—all this is more than we can decide upon. We shall therefore proceed to our more humble but not less useful task, of merely reporting what we have learned.

"Exclusive of its pleasantness to the sense," said Georgina, "there is this advantage attending a garden, that every walk in it may be made sacred to some one or other of our happy recollections. In one you have cultivated the flowers that adorn and perfume it; in another you have made acquaintance, perhaps for the first time, with some picture or secret of nature; in a third you may have made acquaintance with yourself; in another again, you may have enjoyed the conversation of the friend you love best."

Oh! that I were that friend! thought Tremaine.

"But this even is not the least," added Georgina, hesitatingly.

"I so delight to hear you," said Tremaine, seeing

her pause, "that I cannot help begging you to proceed."

The word *delight*, on which Tremaine laid a peculiar emphasis, called a slight blush into her cheek. She went on, however, with a little hesitation—

"Perhaps I am venturing upon things of too grave a nature, and which Mr. Tremaine may blame as affected, or at least as not belonging to my age."

"It is the very last thing that can be attributed to you," exclaimed Tremaine.

Georgina was touched with the air of respect with which this was uttered; she became pensive, and for a moment was without reply. Recovering herself, she went on.

"What I meant to observe," said she, "was, that the secrets of nature are not those alone with which a garden brings us acquainted; for in a garden we have the best opportunities of getting acquainted with ourselves. It is so retired," continued Georgina.

"More so than the closet?"

"Perhaps not—but more soothing; more powerful in opening the heart to itself."

"I should like to hear you explain this," said Tremaine, "for you seem to speak from experience."

"I do indeed," replied Georgina, "and my father—"

"Remember," interrupted Tremaine, "I want

your own sentiments, not papa's. Yet do not think me impertinent."

"That is the last thing any body can think of Mr. Tremaine."

"If you knew how very much I dislike that formality of title from my friend's daughter, you would not use it. Am I not your father's brother? His scholar?" and he paused, as if embarrassed with his recollections.

"I wish you *were* his scholar," said Georgina, gravely.

"I would rather be your's," replied he, leading her back to the subject. "You were about to tell me the effects of a garden in bringing you acquainted with yourself."

"I meant," said Georgina, "that the solitude of a garden is no place for concealment. Every thing in the face of nature is so open, that we are afraid not to be so ourselves. The flowers and blossoms, the fresh earth, the air, the birds, all seem to look upon us with kindness. If I may so say, Nature herself is candid, and will not let us be otherwise."

"A pretty thought," said Tremaine, "but what use do you make of it?"

"It puts one upon self-examination," replied Georgina: "we task our hearts and dispositions, our errors, and faulty thoughts."

"Faulty thoughts in you!" exclaimed Tremaine.

"Oh yes! a thousand; and when I find them too strong to bear, I fly to such a walk as this, and out they all come."

"What a charming confessional!" observed Tremaine; "but where is the confessor?"

"He is every where," said Georgina, looking up and around her with reverence. Tremaine sighed, and Georgina knew, or thought she knew, the cause of that sigh. Her father's doubts about him, her own fears, and the resolutions of both, should those doubts and fears not be done away with, all flashed across her with the quickness of thought. It was a moment of pain, not at all lessened by the feeling that Tremaine never looked so interesting, or seemed so attentive, so particular, so occupied about herself.

"Seriously," said Tremaine, "is it possible so pure, so innocent a creature, can have ever had occasion to task her heart, and correct her disposition?"

"You are not my confessor," replied she, playfully: "but I have no scruple to own that in these walks I have attempted to correct what was wrong in me and to——" Here she again stopped, from a compound feeling that she might be going beyond her strength, or, what was worse, that her companion might think her affectedly sententious.

"To do what, my dear Miss Evelyn?" asked Tremaine.

"To implore assistance of Him, in whose Provi-

dence—it pains, it distresses me——," she here breathed quick, fluttered, and grew absolutely confused.

"Good God!" exclaimed Tremaine, "what can thus agitate you?"

"I will disguise nothing from so kind a friend," replied Georgina, recovering herself.

"What I meant was that it pained me, as it does beyond all description,—if you will forgive me for saying this—"

"Forgive you, Georgina! alas! that such an angel should interest herself—if she does interest herself," added he, thoughtfully.

"We are all interested," returned Georgina, "more perhaps than you imagine; for your neighbours would be far happier in thinking Woodington was inhabited again, if Mr. Tremaine agreed with us more on certain points than he does."

Tremaine was silent, but his gestures became agitated to a perceptible degree.

"You have the goodness of heaven," he exclaimed: and Georgina beginning to be alarmed at the boldness she had ventured upon, observed with a retiring sort of manner, mixed however with sweetness, only still more sweet from the contrast which it formed with her *retenue*, "Mr. Tremaine will I hope remember, that if I am too unreserved in venturing upon these thoughts, and in particular upon this sub-

ject, it is my father who has encouraged me so much to open myself. And remember too—" and she here looked down, and with a softened voice, added, " it is my father's friend with whom I am conversing."

Her gloveless hand here began to be affected with a violent disposition to twirl a rose she had held in it till now; and she did twirl, and twirl till it fell all to pieces.

Tremaine looked at her countenance, and then at her hand, and then at her countenance again. It seemed the most modest, ingenuous, meaning countenance he had ever beheld,—and as for the hand, it was the whitest, smallest, softest, most taper, most like a lady's of the best blood in the kingdom (as indeed her's was) of all hands he had ever seen.

" And am I only your *father's* friend?" said Tremaine, laying much stress upon the word.

" Oh! yes, you are too kind not to be the friend of all who belong to him."

" You believe me then your's, Georgina?"

" Yes! indeed! and in the encouragement you give me to say what I think without reserve, I could almost fancy you my father "—(Tremaine did not like the comparison)—" for you are as like him in kindness," added Georgina, " as you are unlike him in almost every thing else."

Tremaine revived.

Now, though Georgina might, and in fact did mean to apply this, among a great many other differences of a personal nature, to the almost constant difference of opinion between her father and Tremaine, even less vanity than his, particularly with his present wishes always uppermost, might have left, as he did, the mental differences quite out of the question. In truth, there was a great opening for him. He might translate Georgina's difference a thousand ways. The Doctor's plain figure and dress; his brisk voice and language; his unceremonious manner; all very well for a father, but not at all suited, as Tremaine thought, to a lover. Then again many of the Doctor's old-fashioned tastes; his love of country business, and what Tremaine thought the drudgeries of his life; all this he imagined it no disadvantage to be *unlike*. His refinement began to take possession of him, and in the quick glance of his thought, perhaps with a vanity not unpardonable, considering the circumstances, he was not sorry to believe that the application to him of the word *father*, by Georgina, would not hold for a moment.

"I think," said he, "I know not why—my feeling is quite undefined about it," and he stopt.

"And what does Mr. Tremaine think?" asked Georgina, turning her eyes full upon him.

The inquiry and the look together were more than

he could bear. There was a softness in her whole countenance, yet so full of modesty, so innocent, yet so conscious, and her consciousness, like Tremaine's, so undefined even to herself, that the conversation stopt from sheer want of power in the parties to carry it on.

"I think," said Tremaine at last, "and yet my difference in age tells me it is ridiculous, as well as presumptuous, and I cannot sufficiently—" Here he again paused, and even stammered. But for this pause there was now a reason, even if his own difficulty had not occasioned it; for Georgina's face, first turning very pale, became suddenly crimson; it was indeed an entire suffusion of blushes; her heart seemed to beat as if it would have broke through her stays; her eyes turned any where but towards him, and her respiration became impeded.

"Good God!" said Tremaine, "what can have affected you? I fear you are not well."

"It is only the heat," said Georgina; "the morning is close; more air will revive me:" and she rose to quit the summer-house. Tremaine with some surprise, and no small concern, rose also to attend her.

"I wonder if my father is returned," continued Georgina, taking first one walk, then another, with a very hurried pace, then turning into an alley that led to the house, and moving fast towards it.

Now let those who understand a young lady's

heart better than I do, even the most innocent, natural, unaffected heart in the world, let those I say explain this movement of this plain-minded girl, this guileless opposite to all coquetterie. Or is there indeed a little tinge of coquetterie so infused and mixed up in the very elements of the sex (with a view no doubt to interest and enchain us still more, by the little agreeable uncertainties that belong to it), that if there were sexes in heaven, the female angels themselves would perhaps not be without it? But no! that is *not* it; for there was not the smallest spark of it in the whole composition of Georgina.

And yet here was an opportunity, real or supposed (and it makes no difference which), for an explanation of sentiments, her uncertainty about which had formed part of her uneasiness. That the manner and language of Tremaine had created an expectation of something critical to her present state of feeling cannot be denied. Her father had openly expressed his wish that their present situation should be put an end to, one way or the other; it was also her own most serious desire; and yet here, where the occasion had seemed actually to have arisen, and a fair hearing to be the only thing wanting, the hearing was avoided, and to seek her father was made a pretext for leaving the only man in the world she admired, in the moment when his conver-

sation seemed to have grown the most critical to her happiness.

Believe it who will of those who study the sex only in London—or if indeed in woods and shades, the shades of Kensington, and the woods of Hyde Park—believe it who will of those who follow the Lady Gertrudes of the day, in the throng of St. James's—the real impulse of Georgina was occasioned by neither more nor less than that of timid delicacy, combined with that serious goodness, which, with all her sprightliness, were the leading traits, and the charm of her character. The most opposite to vanity in the world, she could not disguise from herself the particularity of Tremaine's manner to her: while her own frank heart told her that it was a manner far from unpleasing; nay, certain points explained, the manner that most delighted her. On the other hand, an explanation of those points was absolutely necessary to her principles and her promises, before a declaration of the most devoted attachment on the part of Tremaine could be even grateful to her.

In a word, it was those principles and promises which had occupied her heart so entirely during the morning, that had caught the alarm. She could not flatter herself that Tremaine's opinions, if so wrong as her father had represented them, could have become suddenly right; and she dreaded lest the decla-

rations to which his last words seemed to be leading, should force her to decide in a manner the most bitter to her own heart which she could possibly conceive.

Yet did those words excite all her curiosity, her interest, her most powerful feelings, and hence her tremor, her struggle, and ultimate flight.

Tremaine, at first alarmed, and afterwards puzzled, made every effort to understand her. He entreated her to take his arm—but the still predominant fear of her mind made her avoid it, till at length approaching the house she flew from him, and sought her chamber, leaving him confounded.

The absence of the Doctor still continuing, his first impulse, in which no doubt there was an infusion of the pride which always more or less belonged to his character, was to return home, and leave capricious ladies to themselves. But Georgina deserved better of him; and, contrary to all that he would formerly have done in the same situation, he resolved to await an explanation, which he was sure she could satisfactorily give of her conduct; in all which we must at least allow he shewed great signs of an improved character.

But alas! was it satisfactorily to explain, that she had listened to Lord St. Clair, and therefore could not listen to him? for so now his fears began to interpret the matter. All farther surmise however was

for the present forbidden by the approach of Evelyn himself, inviting him to the breakfast-room, calling Georgina at the same time, and declaring he was almost famished by a ride to Mount St. Clair.

"What could take you there so early?" asked Tremaine, with some emotion.

"My lady cousin sent for me to come as early as I could," replied Evelyn; "and as the morning air is my delight, I took her at her word, and was there by eight o'clock. Neither my lady cousin, nor my lord, were however stirring; and though my lord sent word he would be with me in a moment, yet as I knew what a dandy's moment was, especially at a toilette, I thought it best to tell him to follow *me*, and so came home again, though, for the sake of the morning, by a round-about way."

Not proceeding with the subject, Tremaine thought it might be intrusive to question him farther; and the entrance of Georgina, restored, but still a little conscious, and busying herself with great activity about the breakfast things, diverted him then from farther inquiries. The visit however to Mount St. Clair gave him a pang from which he could not recover, and Evelyn perceived, and perhaps would have noted his distraction, if Georgina herself had not attracted his raillery by fifty mistakes at the table, —one of which was to break a china cup, for which she would have been well scolded by her father, but

that at the same time she scalded her pretty fingers, and suffered so much greater an accident as to turn all his rage into concern.

CHAP. XXXV.

A MISHAP.

" For Imogen's dear life take mine,
" And though 'tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life."

SHAKSPEARE.

This accident was neither more nor less than that, in endeavouring to save the cup, she entangled her reticule in the foot of the urn, and in withdrawing the one the other was overset, and would have emptied its scalding contents, red hot iron and all, into her lap, had not Tremaine interposed his hands, arms, and almost his whole body, to save her from the danger. By consequence he received all the damage himself, which was in fact not a little; for exclusive of a good scalding through his clothes, the iron seared the entire skin of one of his hands, in snatching it from her dress, with which it had already come in contact, and instantly set it on fire, though

it was as instantly extinguished by her active protector.

As this occasioned a real disaster to our hero, it became an event. The Doctor was seriously distressed; and Georgina, exclusive of her gratitude for being saved from a cruel and dangerous accident, was so affected at his evident suffering, as well as the proof it gave of his eager desire to save her, that after venting a little shriek, she sank into her chair, and burst into tears.

Every one of these tears was delicious to the heart of Tremaine. His pain was forgotten; he would have suffered it twenty times over, to have purchased the rich reward, the voluptuous pleasure of one of these tears.

Evelyn, who knew a burn was a very bad thing for the body, whatever mental consolations attended it, without staying to thank him for saving his dear Georgy, ran out of the room in search of vinegar, with which he returned unfortunately too soon for this history to record the soft, tender, and grateful things, which *would have been uttered*, had the Doctor not found the vinegar, before either of the other parties had found their tongues.

Georgina indeed could not speak for many minutes; but she looked her thanks in a manner to surpass all the words she could have used—which indeed were very few. Evelyn, after ringing for

Mrs. Margaret, and being actively employed in directing a bath for Tremaine's hand, said something about the eternal obligation both himself and daughter were under to him. But Tremaine disclaimed all thanks; assuring him, and looking at Georgina with an eye sparkling with pleasure at her safety, that if his blood instead of his skin had been the price of saving her from danger, he would willingly have shed it.

"I believe you," said Evelyn, "and Georgy does too, only I see she is too much overcome to tell you so."

In fact, Georgina was making sad work of it, endeavouring with her maid to wrap up one of his hands in a handkerchief steeped in vinegar. But she made so many blunders in tying and untying, that she did no good.

"You had better leave him to Margaret," cried Evelyn.

"I believe so," said Georgina, "and I believe I had better run away, for I am unfit to be here; only if Mr. Tremaine thinks I can ever forget what he has suffered for me————" 'Twas all she could say: but in her chamber, her heart said a great deal, in that language which the good, the generous, and the sensible alone can speak, or at least understand; that language which, when it proceeds from virtuous feeling, and not mere weakness, is the favourite one of

heaven; in short, "tears such as angels weep," came to the relief of the oppressed Georgina.

Even Mrs. Winter could not blame those tears, though they occasioned some little alarm to her present views. For that prudent person, who—though not a Demoivres, knew how to calculate chances in life—was fearful that Tremaine's wounded hand would certainly be preferred to the sound one of Lord St. Clair, if both were offered; and as she knew there could be no chance of presiding at Woodington, while on the other hand all Mount St. Clair was open before her, her sympathies for the accident that had befallen Tremaine were by no means so pure and unmixed as those of her mistress.

When therefore she followed Georgina to her chamber, and found her in an arm-chair, melted in tenderness, she began with, "La! Ma'am, I wonder how you can take on so for a little burn, or a scald. The squire says himself it is just nothing at all; and I'm sure it is nothing but what any one would have done for you, let alone the squire, who is so much obliged to master and you, for keeping him from moping himself to death."

Georgina, who was in no humour to encourage this, made no direct reply; but after a pause, and as if in soliloquy with herself, rather than talking to her maid, exclaimed, "I know not who else would have done this for me but my father"

"But I do," cried Mrs. Margaret, as if invited to give her opinton. "There is not a servant in the house who would not have done it for so good a lady; but if you must have gentlefolks to be burned for you, I think I know one, not far off, who would give his crownet and his estate into the bargain, though perhaps not so large as Squire Tremaine's——"

"Winter," interrupted Georgina, with unfeigned surprise, "what can you be talking about?"

"Why, what to be sure," returned Margaret, "but what everybody is talking about—— My lord at the Mount there, who is quite as handsome, and much younger, (indeed I thinks the squire grows older and older every day,) and would be scalded to death in every bone of his skin to save your little finger.

"My lord too," continued the dame, finding that her mistress did not interrupt her, "though so young, goes regularly to church——that is, when he is in the country; and both Mr. Martin and Mrs. Devil—(to be sure I always thought that the oddest name for a lady's woman that ever I did hear)—Well, ma'am, they say my lord is the most generous, politest, dutifullest son that ever was, and so civil to Mr. Trip, though he is only a poor vicar, not at all like my master, you know ma'am, that he is always riding with him when down—a sure proof that he has a great regard for the church."

" Margaret, said Georgina, whose thoughts could stray no longer, " what can all this mean?"

" Mean!" cried Margaret, " ah! to be sure your ladyship knows better than me."

" I protest I do not," answered Georgina.

" What la! ma'am," continued the maid, " it is the talk of all the two parishes, and others too, for what I know."

" What? what, my good woman?" asked her mistress, rising to return down stairs.

" Why that your ladyship is to be lady St. Clair, and my lord you know came last night."

" And is this all?" said Georgina coldly. It had the effect however of making her resume her chair; and seeing that her maid had finished the little business that brought her up stairs, she desired her to leave her, and acquaint her father, and Mr. Tremaine, if he asked, that she was much better.

Georgina, left to herself, could not help pondering what she had just heard. Can it be, said she, that this foolish report is revived? for she knew her name had been coupled some time before with that of St. Clair. Or is there really any thing more meant in Lady St. Clair's letter, than meets the eye? At these words she took from her cabinet the letter she had lately received from her kinswoman, part of which was as follows:

"You know St. Clair is soon coming. His amiable attentions to me are the comfort of my age, and denote a goodness of heart seldom now seen among young men of his quality. What an admirable husband he would make, and what would I not give to see him settled with some amiable girl like yourself, leading a life so much to his taste as this place would afford! I want indeed to tell you a secret about this."

It concluded with announcing an intention to give a *fête* on his arrival, and a request to "to her pretty Georgina" to come and assist in the planning of it.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Georgina, and tore the letter to pieces. Yet could she not prevent herself from thinking of Margaret's intimations; in doing which, with all her absorption in regard to another, and all her conviction that St. Clair could never succeed were he even to court her, if any one imagine she did any thing that the very best girl of twenty in all the world would not have done,—why he and I have read nature in different books.

Recovered from the perturbations of the morning, she was about to rejoin her father and his guest, when she beheld them in the closest conference in the broad walk that led to the rookery fronting her window. Tremaine's hand, by Evelyn's advice, was in a sling, and it touched Georgina to the heart to see it.

What a moment for the Viscount to open the siege he meditated! Yet so fortune contrived it, and so we are bound to relate it.

CHAP. XXXVI.

A YOUNG NOBLEMAN OF GREAT PROMISE.

"The excellent foppery of the world."

SHAKSPEARE.

Lord Viscount St. Clair had been bred at Eton, and afterwards at Cambridge. At the first of these he learned to construe most of the odes of Horace; at the last he took an honorary degree. He afterwards travelled into Greece and Italy, with a gentleman whose expences he paid, and who published his tour in a thick quarto, in which my lord's name was mentioned not less than seven or eight times. On his return, he began to collect a library, and filled a large room with curious editions, and specimens of the antique from Athens. Being of an active disposition, he had not time to cultivate his literary taste, but made up for it by a very laborious attention to politics, and for the first three months of his first session in the House of Commons never missed

a division,—in which he voted always with the ministry, and was more than once appointed a teller. Emboldened by this success, he the next session volunteered moving the address; but being of very independent principles, and moreover having been rather impertinently rallied by his companions at the clubs in St. James's Street (to all of which he belonged,) on his devotion to the court, he the very next day voted against his friends, to shew his independence, and continued to do so ever afterwards.

All this created for him considerable reputation; and his table for the rest of that session was covered with political pamphlets, many of them "from the author."

There is no saying to what this career might not have led: but his father dying, and having acquired a taste for architecture in his travels, he pulled down the Gothic mansion of St. Clair, and built up a handsome Italian villa in its stead. During this time he made a collection of all the books upon architecture that had been published for the last hundred years, most of the plates of which he actually inspected. He also betook himself to planting, and understood Bishop Watson's calculation on the value of larches perfectly well.

It is seldom that a person dedicated to ambition, literature, and the arts, embraces amusements requiring violent personal exertion; but being of a very

versatile genius, Lord St. Clair became a member of the Leicestershire hunt, and at length (having entered several horses at Newmarket) of the Jockey club.

Still there was wanting something to the universality of his reputation; and a nobleman of celebrity having just then broke with her, he formed a "*liaison*," rather "*dangereuse*," with a certain Pauline, who was at that time at the pinnacle of fashion. This giving his mother some uneasiness, to whom he was always particularly dutiful, (visiting her and his new house the first of every September,) he had the greatness and piety to give up his mistress, at a considerable expense indeed, though after a calculation which only did honour to his skill both in figures and self-knowledge. By the first of these he found he could get rid of the lady for little more than one year's purchase; by the last, that it had been some time since he had not cared a farthing about her. But this being accidental and at any rate not known to all the world, did not at all diminish his character as an excellent son.

All this made him, as was natural, a very considerable person; and being now eight-and-twenty, and blessed with a suitable fortune, every body had begun to speculate upon the lady he would marry. Nay, there were many bets upon it at White's. Some of these pointed at the family of a noble peer, high in office, merely because our viscount was in opposition:

an anomaly which has, in fact, much to the credit of our liberality of manners, become exceedingly in fashion. Others, again, propounded an opinion that he had either too much impetuosity, or too much indifference, to be within any speculation at all as to marriage; and that, if he married, he would *commit* matrimony, as he had every thing else.

Such was St. Clair. If Georgina should marry him now after all!

CHAP. XXXVII.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR GETS CONFUSED.

"There is such confusion in my powers."

"How much a man's a fool when he
"Dedicates his behaviours to love!"

SHAKSPEARE.

And why should Georgina not marry the Viscount? We have said he had a good person; nay, he was handsome, and with that thorough look of gentlemanly *nonchalance*, which, like the fine breeding of the Somersets, must be born with a man, and is not to be acquired. Let no one from this imagine that *nonchalance* and fine breeding are the same

things. They are as different as French from Italian ma si, or as radicalism from patriotism.

Still, why should she not? He was young as well as handsome; had a fortune unimpaired, and according to the maxims of the world, had absolutely no vice. To be sure he was said to have been refused by a certain Lady Eleanor Glentworth, the daughter, as was hinted, of one of the ministers. But I never could make that out; and besides, having gone (without knowing why, except that he was laughed at,) headlong into opposition, the offer, if made, was thought to have been only with a view to return to his old political connection, and no one could suspect this with Miss Evelyn.

Then why should she not accept him?—But Lord bless me! the offer has not yet been made. It is strange how I hurry things; though perhaps for this once, not much; for, with whatever intention, here he is at this moment, ringing at Evelyn's gate with all his might.

His entrance was announced to Georgina by the faithful Margaret, while a footman set out in quest of her father, who was walking with Tremaine among the rooks, and engaged with that gentleman in a pointed conversation about this identical peer. Georgina was thinking of him above stairs, and Mrs. Margaret below. The deuce is in it, if I have not disposed things with all possible concomitant inte-

rests to give importance to his visit, whatever might be its object.

That object was, in effect, the most solemn and important that a human being could propose to himself in life. It was neither more nor less than to offer his hand to Miss Evelyn, either through her father, or to herself at once, as opportunity might arise.

Now what a charming chapter might be written upon this subject! for how many thousand ways are there, all of them equally interesting, in which this great question may be propounded, and in how many corresponding thousand ways may it not be received!

It may be done sitting, standing, or singing, laughing or crying, walking, in a carriage, or on horseback, in a drawing-room, or at a ball, (this last very frequent and efficacious,) or at a dinner, or in the open air. I remember it once in a shower of rain, in which the lover having seized his mistress's hand, she had no alternative but to accept him, or get wet through. She chose the first. This was a dangerous experiment, because the shower might have extinguished the flame on both sides.

I have known it in writing, by inuendo, in a copy of verses, which might be taken or not, as the parties pleased. This mode is most convenient, because, if you are refused, you may swear you meant nothing;

for poetry is fiction, and the lady gets only the imputation of vanity for her pains.

Then, again, it may be done boldly, or sheepishly. The last seldom succeeds, except there has been a previous tuition by the mamma, who thinks the offer a good one.

There is your confident manner—(often good); your tender manner, (sometimes better); or your careless indifferent manner: (this last very doubtful, except the lady is very much bent upon it herself, and then any manner will do).

Now what was Lord St. Clair's manner?

But I must really adopt a slower method, or I shall never get through my facts. My digression on the modes, however instructive and entertaining as it regards my reader, was impolitic as it regards myself, for I have two lovers on my hands at the same time; and while St. Clair is offering in the drawing-room, Tremaine is offering in the rookery; and Georgina's doubts and hesitations, and her father's arguments, and old Lady St. Clair's representations, and dame Margaret's persuasions, thicken so fast upon me, that, like Lawyer Dowling, I may assert that if I could cut myself into twenty pieces, I could at this instant find employment for them all.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

HOW TO MAKE AN OFFER.

"What folly I commit I dedicate to you."

SHAKSPEARE.

A FEW pages back we left Lord St. Clair ringing at the gate of Evelyn Hall. Now whether from the agitations of the morning about Tremaine, or the hints in old Lady St. Clair's letter, or the more than hints of her waiting woman, certain it is that Georgina was quite in a tremor when she heard she had been asked for by this distinguished person.

"We shall now see who is shilly shally," said dame Margaret, as her mistress left her to go down stairs.

The Viscount, to do him justice, was very much at his ease, and succeeded in making Georgina feel so too. The weather, Newmarket, a fête at Carlton House, and a fancy ball at the Opera House, were talked of with as much volubility, intermixed with *bons mots* of Beaumont, as if he had come with no design to talk of any thing else. This greatly relieved Georgina, who began to laugh at herself for her own suspicions; when, after about

twenty minutes' conversation, the servant, who had gone in quest of her father, returning with an account that he absolutely could not find him, the Viscount got up to take his leave, and while Georgina was standing to do the honours, with exactly the same manner, voice and countenance in which he had been entertaining her, only as if he had suddenly recollected something of importance, he observed to her, "By the way, my dear Miss Evelyn, my mother wishes sadly to see you upon an affair of consequence, in which my own happiness is materially concerned; and as she cannot come to you, may I have the honour to think you will have the goodness to call upon her in your next ride?"

Georgina assured him she had always great pleasure in calling upon Lady St. Clair. "I suppose," said she, "it is to talk about the fête she announced in a letter I lately received from her?"

"Something more than that, I assure you," returned the Viscount; "something in truth that has brought me all the way from London; and I have told you," added he, with easy confidence, and squeezing her hand, which he had touched as if in taking leave, "my own happiness or unhappiness is most materially concerned in it."

If this were an offer, as it was the first, beautiful as she was, that Georgina had ever received, no wonder she did not understand it. Had it been

more explicit, she would have known how to answer. As it was, it was at least ambiguous; and being so little practised in acquired manners, (particularly dandy manners,) we must not be surprised if she coloured, felt awkward, and knew not what to say.

My lord, whose ease never left him, was delighted. He attributed it all to the dazzling nature of the intimation he had made; thought it the best proof of success; and could almost have expressed a rapture on the occasion, but that the effort of feigning what one does not feel is too much for real dandyism to undertake. He therefore contented himself with saying, "I see I have agitated you, which I assure you does me a great deal of honour; but I hope an interview with Lady St. Clair will settle all to your satisfaction; and perhaps you will now thank me for leaving you, only I hope soon to see you again."

At these words he lifted her passive hand, which, in her surprise, and totally unconscious of it, she had allowed him to retain, and pressed it to his lips; then thinking, what was indeed true, that he had made a prodigious exertion, he opened the drawing-room door, at which they had been standing all this time, and switching his boots with a hurried step till he reached his horses, he rode home and delighted his mother with an account that he had been accepted.

CHAP. XXXIX.

ANOTHER MODE OF MAKING AN OFFER.

" The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness,
" And time to speak it in."

SHAKSPEARE.

It is I think high time to return to Tremaine, whom we left with his hand in a sling, walking with his friend to the rookery, in which they were sought, but not found, by Roger the footman.

Evelyn was for many minutes full of Tremaine's kindness in having saved his dear child's person at the expense of his own.

" I confess," said he, " I should not have liked to have seen poor Georgy so hurt as she must have been, judging from the pain you have suffered; yet believe me I would much rather have been the person to have saved her myself."

" And believe me," answered Tremaine, " I am more rejoiced than I can tell you, that you were not."

It was not that Tremaine was proud, or vain, or boastful, on this occasion. He did not feel an inch taller, nor was his heart inflated in a single vesicle the more for it. He was neither *fier*, *orgueilleux*, nor *glorieux*, nor even *avantageux*, at his good fortune, as a Frenchman would have been. Yet there was an air of happy tenderness about him. No! he would not have parted with the satisfaction of having lamed himself for a considerable time, in saving the most beautiful person in the world, for all that the world could have given him, except that person herself.

Evelyn was not only surprised but overpowered by the warmth of feeling his friend had just exhibited; so that before he could make any reply, Tremaine had exclaimed, somewhat abruptly—

"She has certainly the most beautiful hand and arm that ever belonged to woman!"

Evelyn did not perceive the concatenation of ideas by which this exclamation had been produced, at a moment when the hand and arm of the lady were not at all in question, but observed—"It is well my daughter does not hear you; for though I believe she has as little vanity as is reasonable for her sex, I know no girl of twenty that could stand this."

"Would she were thirty!" said Tremaine, and walked on.

"She is very much obliged to you, and I too," observed Evelyn; "but ten years are a gift of which I am not now at all ambitious."

"Then I wish I were Lord St. Clair," said Tremaine.

"Nay, now I cannot understand you," answered Evelyn.

"Then, my friend," rejoined Tremaine at once, as if catching at the opportunity—"with all your penetration, your learning, and observation, you are not so read as I thought you in the human heart. Is it possible you do not know that I have long loved your daughter—loved her *to distraction?*"

"How long have you known it yourself?" asked Evelyn.

"I believe ever since I first saw her; but last night to a certainty, when I was told that St. Clair had proposed to her."

"The secret then is out," observed Evelyn, recollecting Lady St. Clair's letter.

"Good Heaven! he has then proposed to her, and been accepted! Her agitations in the garden this morning—your visit.—Ah! it is all clear to me."

"I wish it were so to me," answered Evelyn, "but to me it is all darkness, darkness not even visible. I know nothing of St. Clair."

"Nor that he would be accepted if he were to offer?"

"That I cannot pretend to say."

"Good God!" cried Tremaine, "could you not tell whether he would be accepted or refused?"

"As I am not the person to be married," replied Evelyn, "I could not."

"Would you then leave it all to your daughter?"

"Most assuredly."

"I am lost!" exclaimed Tremaine.

"It is at least time you should find yourself," returned Evelyn. "But at present, my good and dear friend, you are too much agitated for me to make you out. Let us turn to this walk which leads to your spring. I little thought it could be at any time, still less so soon, the scene of another conversation, if possible more interesting than that of yesterday."

"Yesterday! ah! I shall never forget it!" said Tremaine.

"I trust not," replied his friend, "but our present subject—"

"Is very different; and, alas! as little likely to be satisfactory."

Tremaine then entered at large into his present subject; made the whole confession of his long observation of Georgina's character, his instantaneous admiration of her beauty, the enchantment of her

manners, the impression of her virtues—his jealousy, his despair.

Evelyn, with a heart full and eyes glistening, observed he did not understand the adoption of the last two words.

"Why, I am not such a coxcomb to suppose that, with such a disparity of years, I can be thought of at all, much less in comparison with St. Clair, who, whatever you may think, has, I have reason to believe, a serious design to offer to Miss Evelyn."

"I wish," replied his friend, "this interesting matter were half as free from difficulty in other points as it is on the score either of your age, or of Lord St. Clair's pretensions. That a girl does not usually give her affections to a man twenty years older than herself, I grant you; as readily that she may be dazzled by a coronet and a young and handsome fellow. But Miss Evelyn is perhaps not of this class of females, and will decide, I imagine, upon higher grounds than either the first or the last—than the last certainly."

"You allow, then," cried Tremaine in alarm, "that the difference of years may have its natural effect?"

"Can I dispute it, and speak as sincerely as usual?" answered Evelyn. "But at least my daughter's tastes are not those of the many. Her education

in seclusion and ignorance of the world; her opinion of your accomplishments; her high sense of honour wherever she sees it; not to mention her sensibility to the attentions with which you distinguish her, and the absence of all those attentions from others: all this might give you chances even against our cousin of St. Clair, whose trifling character I should be disappointed if she did not think herself above."

In uttering these words, the Doctor erected his chest, and breathed quicker; for to say truth, there was but one subject on which he had what may be called pride—his daughter, for whom, in point of mere rank or fortune, no prince on earth he thought could be too good.

The pleasure conceived by Tremaine at this was mixed. He was pleased with the tone in regard to St. Clair; he was not displeased with the tone in regard to himself. Yet not only it seemed there were *difficulties*, not easily to be got over, but some of the ideas broached by the Doctor, as to the seclusion of her life, her ignorance of the world, and the absence of attentions from others, by no means flattered the deep-rooted, and perhaps here not improper pride of our man of refinement.

He walked on for some minutes without reply, during which, ideas of the most important kind crowded so fast upon him, that he could find no tongue to give them utterance.

"Yes," at last he exclaimed, "it is certainly true. Miss Evelyn has seen little of the world: of those societies of which she is formed to be the ornament. There are few, none that can deserve her; and of the few she might not reject, she has not even been where one could be found. If she see them, what chance have I? If she see them not, could I even succeed, to what should I owe my success?"

The Doctor, whose heart and head too were almost as full as his friend's, and who could at first as little find vent for his thoughts, perceived, from his knowledge of Tremaine, what string was now vibrating. It gave him, however, little uneasiness; and he would willingly have compounded for Tremaine's satisfying him upon other points, as well as he (the Doctor) could satisfy Tremaine upon this.

Breaking silence, therefore, on his part, he observed that Tremaine seemed to pay but a poor compliment to his daughter's rank in society, when he supposed her so ignorant. Then, in a lighter tone, he asked—"Has she not seen all Yorkshire? And is there now such a difference between Yorkshire and Grosvenor Square?"

Tremaine looked inquiringly, as if to make out whether he could mean to rally on such a subject.

"Besides," continued he, "has she not seen Grosvenor Square itself at Bellenden House?"

"My friend," said Tremaine, "you are jesting, which I did not expect."

"Less perhaps than you imagine," returned Evelyn. "That there must be persons of infinitely more worth than Lord St Clair and Mr. Beaumont, *et id genus omne*, is I hope true; yet you must confess yourself, they are men of the very first *monde*, and would be produced as very fair specimens of the generality of bachelors of fashion. Beaumont is besides generally considered as a man of natural abilities; and our cousin there came home from Greece and Florence with the reputation of a young man of the greatest promise. Yet, if that were all, I would bid not only your own heart, but your own pride, which I perfectly well understand, not to be afraid."

"I thank you," replied Tremaine, "for so much comfort as this would give me (and indeed it is not a little), that the ten years' advantage which St. Clair has over me could be done away. But all young men are not St. Clairs."

"Still less," returned Evelyn. "are they Tremaines. In many high qualities, as well as accomplishments, they certainly are not; and without these, I am mistaken if the freshest bloom of youth could touch my daughter's heart. Would to Heaven every thing else were as suitable!"

"You agree then," said Tremaine, in some agitation, "that this sad disparity——"

"You still speak of disparity of years," observed Evelyn.

"I do. Of what else would you have me speak?"

"Alas!" returned his friend, and pressing the arm that was within his,—"would to Heaven there was no other disparity!"

"What can you possibly mean?"

"I mean all that a good father, or good young woman, must mean, when they are not indifferent to every thing beyond this world. I wish there were not such cruel disparities of opinion upon all that can concern the very heart and soul of man—all that can belong to us in this world or the next. With such dissimilitudes, or rather such fatal opposition between us as there is on these points, much as we love you, were you prince of the world, I tell you fairly, you would not succeed."

Tremaine was thunderstruck at these words. He had not expected them, had not contemplated their possibility, had not even thought of the case. He breathed thick and frequent; and it was some time before he could recover his voice. His whole hope seemed blasted by what was totally unlooked-for. Indeed, no young person, and no young person's father or mother, that had ever engaged his atten-

tion, had ever thought of such a thing, He was confounded, and his eyes swam in a kind of giddiness.

Evelyn pitied him from his heart, and not the less from seeing such a devoted attachment to his daughter, that could the difficulty be got over, no match that the world could offer would have been half so agreeable to him.

At length recovering sufficient voice, Tremaine made an effort to ask whether these were Miss Evelyn's sentiments as well as her father's?

"They are," said Evelyn.

"You have then discussed the matter?" observed Tremaine with some shrewdness.

The Doctor saw all the difficulty of his answer; but between difficulty and truth, he never had a choice. He therefore told him very fairly, that he had for some time perceived, if not his attachment, yet at least that he treated and talked of Georgina as he did of no other woman; in short, quite enough to awaken a father's observation.

"Nor will I conceal from you my uneasiness," added he, "when I found I had more and more reason to suspect, in regard to your religious principles, what yesterday was so dreadfully confirmed."

"Say rather my no principles," said Tremaine with a sigh. "And yet," continued he, while a transient gleam shot across his face, for which I will not pre-

tend to account—"why should this make you uneasy on Miss Evelyn's account?"

"It would be gross affectation, nay, duplicity," replied Evelyn, "to say, I do not understand you. You are welcome, therefore, to such pleasure as it may give you, to learn, that as a father I feared the impressions of those attentions, notwithstanding the disparity which so alarms you."

Tremaine's countenance grew light.

"But in justice to Georgina," continued the Doctor, "I am also bound to say my fears are at an end, for no mischief has been done."

Tremaine's features fell again; and he observed, with some distance in his manner—

"You must have gone far with her to come to this conclusion."

To this Evelyn replied with prompt firmness—"It was my duty to examine her, and I did so."

The conversation dropped for a few paces, when Tremaine resumed it, by asking, not without some trepidation—

"Am I to understand then, that except for my tenets, as you call them, Miss Evelyn——"

But he could get no farther.

"My dear friend," said his upright companion, "I need not point out to a mind like your's the injustice, the unfairness, of tempting me to give an opinion on this question; an opinion, which to

whatever side it leans, must compromise me either with my daughter or my friend, and which, in regard to my daughter, cannot but end in compromising her delicacy."

"Oh! God forbid!" said Tremaine. "'Tis a delicacy on which there never was, and never can be a spot."

"I hope so; nay, I believe so," observed Evelyn; "nor can I do better than to leave it to its own keeping."

"Any way then," said Tremaine mournfully, "my doom is sealed."

"I have not said so," replied Evelyn. "On the contrary, if it pleased Heaven to enlighten you to a sense of its own truth——"

"What then?" cried Tremaine, catching at these words.

"Why then my daughter (I mean no more) is open to be woo'd; and need I add a father's wishes that she may be won?"

Tremaine thanked him, but with less warmth of manner than usual, and continued many minutes in silence.

"You are displeased with me," said Evelyn after a pause.

"I have at least no right to be so," answered Tremaine. "I dare say you have done what every father thinks himself bound to do."

"I have done nothing," said Evelyn.

"Miss Evelyn's feeling is then spontaneous?"

"Most assuredly."

"But upon your representation that I was——. May I ask what was the character you gave of me?"

"You are unkind to put it in this way," replied his companion, "for well you know that but for those sad opinions, every feeling, wish, and even prejudice, is in your favour. But with my observation of your attentions, mean they what they might, I could not shrink from the duty of informing the daughter of my heart, of the wild overthrow of what I think one of the finest of minds, which has led you, while you acknowledge a Creator, to deny his providence, to believe that we perish like the beasts, and to live an unhappy infidel, instead of a reverent christian."

"Am I all this?" said Tremaine with emotion.

"You have said it," answered Evelyn, "and believe me it rent my very heart."

"Good friend!" cried Tremaine, "but what if these opinions were renounced, were changed—— should I then——"

"You would then be at liberty—that is, the field would be open."

"But with what hope of success?"

"I am not the person to decide."

" Would you bid me despair?"

" No."

The conversation again stopped, and Tremaine fell into much thought; when, after some minutes' interval, and assuming a very solemn air, in which there was more formality than he ever yet had shewn to his friend, he said, " Doctor Evelyn, hitherto you have answered for your daughter, in a matter on which you allow she alone must judge. Have you any objection to let her answer for herself?"

" None in the world."

" Then, though I perish, I will make the attempt."

A bell which was sometimes rung when Evelyn was in his grounds and particularly wanted, now began to sound through the little dell formed by the river on whose banks they were walking; and as the conversation seemed exhausted, Tremaine proceeded to let himself into the walk by the spring, which he had by that time reached; and Evelyn returned to the house.

CHAP. XXXIX.

AN AFFRONT.

"'Touch me with noble anger.'"

SHAKSPEARE.

"Does Lord St. Clair then think that my girl is to be had for asking, and for no other reason that I can discover but because he is a lord? I trust he must shew far other pretensions, as well as my lady his mother, my affectionate and admiring cousin here, as she calls herself. I imagine he must do something more than merely throw his handkerchief. His conduct is a downright affront. I believe indeed he is only a silly fellow, but he must be made to know it."

This last sentence was the last of a series sufficiently angry to exhaust all the anger that Evelyn was master of. He had begun with a letter from Lady St. Clair in one hand, and another from her son in the other—striding in considerable agitation up and down the eating-room as soon as he had read these letters.

It was they that had occasioned his recall from the brook side, by order of Georgina, who had also received a letter to the same import from Lady St.

Clair, which she had read in her own chamber, where she now continued.

"Call Miss Evelyn down," said the Doctor, after ringing his bell, and resuming his perambulation of the eating-room. "I protest I know not how to answer these letters."

"You shall answer them for me," continued he to his daughter as she entered, "for you are the party concerned."

Georgina was thinking more of Tremaine than either Lord St. Clair or his mother.

"Is Mr. Tremaine then gone home?" asked she with some anxiety. "I fear his hand and arm are much hurt."

"He is a brave fellow," said the Doctor, "and deserves you, with all his pride, much better than this silly Viscount."

"*Deserves* me!" exclaimed Georgina, laying an emphasis on the word.

"Aye! better than this promising boy, as I remember he was called, though I never thought him so,—and who would still I suppose be a promising boy, but that he has been several years a man."

"My dear father, I know not what you mean by *deserves*."

And yet Georgina knew very well what she wished him to mean.

The Doctor was still in thought, and the poor girl

agitated to the extreme, ventured to begin a question of the utmost importance to her heart.

"Has Mr. Tremaine then ———", said Georgina, but she could get no farther.

"Mr. Tremaine will speak for himself, and put all my Georgy's firmness to the trial."

This speech renewed all the palpitations of the early morning, from which, in truth, what had passed with Lord St. Clair, and the letters just received, had by no means tended to recover her; neither were they at all cured by the warm and encouraging caresses of her father, who embraced and kissed her with fervour, and implored blessings on her head.

"But these letters, my love!" said Evelyn.

Georgina would have much rather talked of Tremaine.

"They seem to say that all is settled between you; though I can scarcely guess that he has been here, much less that he has talked to you on the subject. How such a result as he conceives has ensued, can have been brought about, baffles all my conjectures."

"And mine," said Georgina; "nor am I yet recovered from my astonishment at Lady St. Clair's understanding of it."

"Has he even spoke to you?" asked Evelyn.

"Spoken! yes; but to what purpose I should never have known, but for this letter, and a strange manner of taking leave of me."

She then recounted nearly all that had passed; which moved the Doctor to risibility rather than to anger; and he perhaps would have laughed aloud, but that this was forbidden by the thought of what awaited Tremaine, and the sight of the first uneasy looks he had ever beheld in his life on the countenance of his sweet Georgy.

As it was, he could not help saying he was sure St. Clair would appeal to the Jockey Club, who would certainly condemn her to fulfil her *engagement.*

"I am most distressed about it," said Georgina, "I never meant ——— I could not even guess —— I was vexed and surprised, nay alarmed at his manner in leaving me; I wanted indeed all my dear father's support."

She then recounted (and coloured violently as she did it,) that he had suddenly kissed her hand, in token, as she now found that he was accepted.

"Coxcomb!——or rather poor shallow fellow!" said Evelyn, with some anger; "yet he is the hero of Lady Gertrude's circle, thinks Beaumont a man of first-rate abilities, and is thought by many the ornament of White's."

The Doctor's anger soon evaporated.

"Be at ease, my love," said he, after a pause: "a quarter of an hour's ride, and five minutes' talk, will set all this right. We must expect to be abused, certainly misrepresented:" then seeing his daughter

downcast, he told her to cheer up, for those who could abuse her could only be found among the wicked.

Georgina assured him, and her assurance was true, that as long as she possessed his approbation, and her own conscience did not accuse her, the opinion of persons who could not be informed would give her little trouble.

She saw her father then mount his horse, and ride for the second time that day to St. Clair, without much trouble of mind. But though her eye pursued him from her window till he was out of sight, her thoughts were at Woodington.

CHAP. XL.

HOW TO BEAR A REFUSAL.

"This weak impress of love is as a figure
"Trenched in ice, which with an hour's heat
"Dissolves to water and doth lose its form."

"Being a maid, yet rosy'd over
"With the virgin crimson of modesty."

SHAKSPEARE.

Evelyn, with the decision that belonged to him, saw not only the exact state of what had passed between St. Clair and his daughter, but that every

minute was of importance in removing an error, which, if long unremoved, might become highly mischievous. He therefore pushed on, and was luckily at the gate of Villa St. Clair just as its owner in his post-chariot and four was driving out of it to Evelyn Hall. To do my lord justice, the complacency of his features amounted almost to elation, at the sight of what he thought his future father-in-law, coming to convey his daughter's consent and his own joy.

Evelyn, however, as soon as he had dismounted, took him by the arm, and trusting to his superiority in age, having in truth often had him on his knee as a child, hurried him into a private walk, and rushing *in medias res,* told him he was come to clear up some unfortunate mistakes, which he would trust to his candour to forgive.

The Viscount almost actually changed countenance at this intimation.

"I hope, my dear Sir," he exclaimed, "I can't have been misunderstood. I endeavoured to be as explicit as possible."

"Your letters certainly were so," replied Evelyn, "but your interview as certainly not."

"I told Miss Evelyn my happiness or unhappiness was concerned," rejoined the Viscount; "and when a young lady hears that, and does not reply, surely *c'est une affaire arrangée.*"

"I am afraid our country manners do not keep pace with yours in town, if that is the way the thing is understood there.

"I can only say," replied the Viscount, "that many a man in town has been called out for not fulfilling words much less explicit."

He said this with even emotion, but whether of love or resentment seemed problematical.

"My dear Lord," cried Evelyn, "you are to consider that the object you have thus honoured is a mere country girl; and though not beneath your notice, if I may be permitted to say so, being indeed your kinswoman, and not uneducated or unaccomplished,—"

St. Clair stopped, and seemed to listen with a sort of sullenness, when at length assuming an air of exquisite *hauteur*, keeping his body straight, but bowing his head as low as that position would admit—

"Am I to understand," said he, "that my proposals are declined?"

"What can I say?" returned Evelyn, a little moved on his part. "I have told you I came to explain a mistake; but I trust you will not give me the pain of thinking you offended."

"If Miss Evelyn is indeed such a novice, so totally ignorant of the forms of society, I know not what to say to her behaviour," replied St. Clair; "but surely

she cannot have heard of what sacrifices I have made for her—sacrifices which even you, my good Doctor, may probably be surprised at."

"I confess I have not heard of them," said Evelyn.

"Surely you must have heard of my attentions to Lady Gertrude Bellenden, and I can only say that ——," here he hesitated.

"That she accepted you?" asked Evelyn.

"Pretty nearly so, for I had actually made up my mind to offer to her."

"Which you concluded was the same thing?"

"Undoubtedly," answered St. Clair.

"My dear lord," returned Evelyn, "I hope it is not yet too late."

"I trust not," replied the peer, relaxing into carelessness and quickening his pace. "Country ladies I see are strange creatures, and I was wrong to come down on such an errand. But in fact my mother was to blame for it all."

"I am sorry for it," observed Evelyn; then seeing his companion quickening his pace still more, and assuming more and more carelessness, even so as to pick up a pebble, and throw it at some swans in a neighbouring sheet of water:

"My good lord," cried Evelyn, "I am glad to see this *contretemps* is not of much consequence to you."

"Not the least in the world," replied the Viscount. "I have beeu misled by my mother; and really, to please her as much as myself, resolved to shew Miss Evelyn the preference to Lady Gertrude; which, give me leave to tell you," added he, drawing up his fine tall figure, "I thought no common mark of attachment."

"I think so too," observed Evelyn, "and we are proportionably your debtors. But presuming on our old acquaintance, may I ask, was your love for Lady Gertrude exceedingly great?"

"As great as a man usually feels for a proper and eligible wife."

"May I go on to ask, when this love was abandoned?"

"I know not that it ever was abandoned, only I loved Miss Evelyn more, as I think I have proved."

"Believe me, Miss Evelyn will be fully sensible of the obligation she is under to you, but ——"

"But my proposals are declined. No more needs be said; you are the best judges of what alliance will suit you best; and I wish Miss Evelyn a higher and better *parti*."

Had this been said with any thing like a feeling of mortification or concern, Evelyn would have been moved at it, and attempted something soothing in reply. But upon looking into the Viscount's face, he could see little there but pride struggling to con-

ceal what he evidently felt as an affront. As to love, much more *wounded* love, there was not a feature of it; and it decided Evelyn to take his leave, without even an attempt to conciliate him. They returned therefore to the house, where Evelyn's horse was still waiting, which mounting, the Viscount took leave of him with the very stiffest condescension, and instantly getting into the carriage which had also been waiting, threw himself into a corner of it, after ordering it, in Evelyn's hearing, to drive to Bellenden House.

CHAP. XLI.

A PREPARATION.

"If that thy bent of love be honourable,
"Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow."

SHAKSPEARE.

"You will not have the sin of murder on your head," continued he to Georgina, after he had told her what had passed. "He bears the willow gallantly. How can I pity you enough for refusing a coronet and such devoted affection at the same time?"

"I never had a thought of the one or the other," said Georgina.

"Lady Gertrude will think differently," observed her father.

"I shall be glad if she does, for they seem to be more suited to each other than I should have been to him, or Lady Gertrude to ——", a sigh stopt what she was going to say.

Evelyn looked at her, and soon perceived whereabouts she was. She had by no means recovered the events of the morning.

A more critical, and indeed more painful task now awaited him, and poor Georgina was destined to hear of a conversation of far more consequence to her peace. Evelyn offered to defer it till the next day, and at any rate proposed to her to take time to rally her scattered spirits. But she begged him to proceed then.

"Suspense, I think," said Georgina, "will only make me worse."

The Doctor thought so too, and sitting down by her on her own sopha, (for it was in her little dressing-room he had sought her when he returned from St. Clair,) he took her hand, and with many a caress, suited to the support which he saw she wanted, communicated to her the whole substance of what had passed with Tremaine. To his astonishment he found that it did not give that affliction to Georgina's

feelings which he had expected. The Doctor was indeed rather past the age of love. He was too acute, however, not to perceive at once the reason for that absence of sorrow, if I may not rather say that accession of pleasure, which the first part of his communication threw over the whole countenance of his daughter. She at first indeed looked down upon the hand that was fast grasped in her's, while he was speaking; her bosom heaved with agitation, she blushed "celestial rosy red:" and I question if the angel to whom those charming words were applied, could have looked more beautiful or more happy. At length, as her father went on, a dimpled smile of ineffable sweetness lit up her lovely features, and she hid her face on Evelyn's shoulder, as if she would have concealed her emotion even from herself. Then in a hesitating voice, in which however a man of much less penetration than her parent could have discerned that there was as much of pleasure as of any other feeling, she exclaimed,

"Oh! my dear father, at least then he loves me!"

Poor Evelyn, whose heart was sustaining a conflict from other thoughts, had not calculated upon this first impression. He had only looked to the concern that would be occasioned by the principles of Tremaine; and he felt startled, and not too happy at seeing his daughter so moved. But the Doctor, as I have said, was past the age of love.

"True, my dearest girl," returned he; "nor will I conceal either from you or myself the pleasure of thinking that in this our friend's feelings are consistent with his conduct; that he has not attempted to trifle either with you or with me."

"He never could," observed Georgina, in a low voice.

"His honour is like pure gold," continued Evelyn, "nor do I believe there is the smallest sophistication in his feelings. He loves you, in short, as I would wish you to be beloved. But ——"

"Alas! my dearest father," replied Georgina, changing from all her happiness. "I know what that *but* would mean—his principles are insuperable, and the gate for ever closed—none but the Almighty can open it:" and she gave a sigh that seemed to shake her very heart.

"What if you could do it yourself?" said Evelyn: "he means to seek you."

"To seek me?"

"Yes! he asked if you thought as I did, and I told him yes."

"You did right," said Georgina, mournfully. "But why then seek me?"

"He thought he had a right to be answered from your own lips, and I could not but allow it."

"My dearest father, you are always most just—but believe me this interview will be painful."

The entrance of Margaret with a note to her master, interrupted this conversation. It was from Tremaine, requesting permission, at her own time, to wait upon his daughter. If ever the warm fancy, that "the body thinks," seemed as if it could be realized, it was at that moment in the person of the lovely Georgina. The blush of agitating interests struck her father almost as much as it would Tremaine himself, had he been present; nor are we positive that this lovely blush, indicating so many contending feelings, was absolutely without the expression of pleasure: for say what we will, the impression of being beloved where we wish to be so, will throw a ray of gold over the darkest disappointment, and mingle sweetness with a draught, otherwise as bitter as gall.

God help thee, Georgina! thou never wert made to taste of gall; nor willingly shouldst thou be nourished with any thing but the nectar of heaven. And oh! that heaven in its mercy keep far from that dear and innocent heart the storm of affliction, with which in its wisdom it sometimes tries the purest of its favourites!

"And what shall I say to him, my girl?" asked Evelyn.

"Advise me," said Georgina.

"I think to-morrow," returned her father, "to-morrow will be the best time. You have to-day had too many agitations of different kinds not to stand in

need of repose. You will have time to recollect and compose yourself, for what will I know be a trial to you."

"To-morrow let it be," said Georgina.

Evelyn then left her, to answer Tremaine's note; and Georgina, locking her chamber door, fell upon her knees in a recess of the room, and poured forth her heart to a higher friend, protector, and guide, than even the one who had just quitted her. She implored to be enlightened and strengthened; to be led into the right path, and kept in it; and she rose with half the benefit already conferred, from the mere act of having asked it.

CHAP. XLII.

VERY WARM.

"All made of passion, and all made of wishes,
"All adoration, duty, and observance,
"All humbleness, all patience, and impatience,
"All purity, all trial."

SHAKSPEARE.

Evelyn had asked Tremaine to breakfast, preliminarily to the interview he had sought with his

daughter; and the fluttering heart of Georgina had to sustain both agitation, disappointment, and relief, when, after a loud ringing at the gate, not Tremaine but her friend Careless entered the room.

Perhaps it was the only time in her life when she was not glad to see him; and yet, for the moment, a sensation of relief accompanied his approach.

"Did you expect me?" said Careless, eyeing the breakfast things, and seeing three covers. "If you did, you must have had the second sight, for I did not know myself I was coming here till five minutes ago."

"And what has produced us the sudden honour?" asked Evelyn.

"Why, to find out truth, if I can, among a pack of lies," said Jack, taking a chair;——"but I see nothing but plates and cups," added he, getting up again: "where the devil is the cold beef? and who have you coming?"

"Mr. Tremaine breakfasts here," said Evelyn.

"He is always here, I think," cried Jack. "Well, so much the better for him," and he looked slily at Georgina. "And now I think of it, it is vast convenient, for a good many of the lies, or the truth, or both, mayhap, are about him."

The new custom of Georgina's cheeks here found plenty of employment; and Careless, whom she had been used to set upon and mislead in very sport, just

as she pleased, now, for the first time in her life, seemed a redoubtable being to her.

"Let us hear your gossip before he arrives," said Evelyn.

"You shall," answered Careless; "but now I think on't, it is not much about him; but, as old Qui Tam would say, only collateral."

Georgina felt greatly relieved.

"Then who is your principal?" cried Evelyn.

"You: and that's the reason I came; and yet not so much you, as you," and he looked again at Georgina.

The poor girl was again as red as scarlet; but Jack, again correcting himself, exclaimed, "after all, it is most about your kinsman St. Clair."

"Proceed," said the Doctor, with some impatience.

"Why, they say (but them bucks never know their own minds,) that he came down on purpose to run away with Georgy, for which, if she had been base enough to leave Yorkshire, I would have cut her off with a shilling. Nay, but the old woman, his mother, said so herself, to the old Swish, who tucks her up of a night, and worms every thing out of her; and she told it to some one who told it ....."

"To your Becky," interrupted the Doctor.

"Just so," said Jack, who was, however, a little

disconcerted; for of all things he was jealous of Becky's authority, from which he derived a great deal of the family histories of the neighbourhood, which he was fond of relating, but to which Evelyn seldom submitted without a severe cross-examination; and this had so often demolished her intelligence, that the authority itself, together with Jack's pleasure in it, had frequently tottered. Hence, whenever he was pushed to vouch Becky as his informant, particularly by Evelyn, he became immediately nervous for the fate of all he was about to bring forward.

At present, events of the greatest possible importance in Jack's world depended upon it; and he seemed by this simple observation of Evelyn to be called upon, not merely to narrate and put together, in the most conspicuous order, a story rather long and complex in its parts, but to sustain and demonstrate the whole character of his housekeeper, for accuracy and authority; which character, as has been observed, was in this house at least a little doubtful.

"Just so," said Jack, "but give me leave to tell you, whatever you may think, Becky is oft'ner right than wrong."

"Well, what does she say now?" asked Evelyn.

"It is a long story," replied Careless, "but the upshot is, that this sprig of a lord had been a dangling the whole winter long after Lady Gertrude,

but Lady Gertrude was dying for love of Mounseer Melancholy; that the Mounseer did not know his own mind, no more than my lord, but if he had been young enough, wanted certainly to come a courting to you, Georgy. So, to be beforehand with him, my lord resolved to come a courting too, and this he thought would get you from the 'squire, and spite Lady Gertrude at the same time."

"All very well contrived," observed Evelyn, "and very righteously resolved."

"So you will say," pursued Careless, "for the short and the long of it was, that as soon as Lady Gertrude heard this, she went raving mad with jealousy, and sent over to the peer to recall him, and it is all settled that they are to be married directly."

"Not unlikely," said Evelyn, "but by what I see, Georgy's share in this story is that she is only to be cheated out of a husband."

"Why that's the puzzle," replied Jack, "that I want to have cleared up; for you must know I was told you were at the bottom of it all; you were consulted throughout; my lord would not stir a step without you; and he was here once, and you twice at St. Clair, yesterday, and afterwards he set off like smoke for Bellenden House, where it was all settled last night; and this last, mind, I did not hear from Becky, so perhaps you will believe it."

"And whom did you hear it from?" asked Evelyn.

" My brother," answered Jack, " who is now at Lord Bellenden's, and was told it last night by St. Clair himself; and as he was just sending off a haunch of venison by the coach to the Hound and Horn club at Belford, he sent me this here note along with it."

Jack here, with some triumph, produced his credentials, and as he gave the note to Evelyn to read, concluded with saying,

" And now I think you will not question Becky's news another time."

The note was perfectly explicit, and added, in terms, that as Lord St. Clair by no means meant the event to be a secret, Careless was at liberty to mention it to the club, or any where else he pleased, and as soon as he pleased.

Evelyn at once saw through the design of this, of which the senior Careless was thus the instrument. It was evident that St. Clair wished, as soon as possible, that it should reach himself and his daughter, in order to shew them of how very little consequence their refusal had been.

" These men of the first *monde*," said the Doctor, putting the note into Georgina's hand, " are surely a different race from all the rest of human kind, in all they think, say, and do."

All further discussion was now interrupted by the

arrival of Tremaine, who bit his lip at seeing Jack there; but, upon the whole, trusting to a speedy opportunity of detaching him away, and the whole party loving him as a thoroughly attached friend, they were perhaps as well satisfied that, during the mere breakfasting, their consciousness should be a little diverted from itself by such a companion.

It was impossible, however, for the recent intelligence to escape mention during breakfast, and it cost Tremaine, at first, no inconsiderable alarm. He had remarked that Georgina received him with a look peculiarly conscious and downcast, nay abashed; and before he could well draw her out into the common tea-table discourse, he was abruptly saluted by Jack's asking, with an almost wink at his companions,

"Have you heard of the new Lady St. Clair? My lord offered, and was accepted yesterday, and all the bells of Belford will be set ringing as soon as I can get there."

Tremaine, who had not yet obtained the use of his wounded hand, was very near breaking another of the Doctor's china cups, or at least overturning it into Georgina's lap, at this sudden question, which brought all the blood into his cheeks. It was evident he had heard nothing of Jack's intelligence.

Looking at his friends for information, he was

surprised, and perhaps not quieted, at hearing from Evelyn that it was all perfectly true. What would have been the consequence might not have been calculated, had not the Doctor, seeing his emotion, put Jack's note into his hands, saying—

"Notre chancelier vous dira le reste."

"This is most surprising," exclaimed Tremaine.

"I don't know why," said Careless, "for both the man and the girl have been a long time longing to be married. Where's the wonder they should come together?"

"True," said Tremaine, and the breakfast went on.

When it was finished, Jack fairly spared Evelyn all contrivance to get rid of him; for scarcely had they risen from the table, before he said he must leave them to put his threats into execution of setting the bells of Belford a ringing.

"Happy mortal!" exclaimed Tremaine, pursuing him with his eye, and sighing as he spoke :—"careless in nature as in name. I believe, after all, it would puzzle the best of our philosophers to equal him."

"We will therefore let him alone," said Evelyn, "and wish there were more like him in the world."

At these words the good Doctor fairly left the room.

Alone with Georgina, at his own desire, and by her consent, as well as her father's, what was now the

situation of Tremaine! The crisis of his life seemed approaching; ten thousand feelings, notions, ideas, seemed pulling him different ways, and crowded so fast upon him, that every thing he had brooded over for the last two days seemed blended into one vague mass of indistinctness. Never was man at the moment so little fitted for the undertaking which yet he had voluntarily courted.

I suppose every man thinks so when first about to address the object of his love. But how different was Tremaine's from the usual situations of this sort! He was not merely ignorant of the state of her heart towards him; it was her mind, her principles, her scruples, he had to sound; he was to ascertain, not merely whether she loved him, but whether she would even allow him to ask that question.

Georgina on her part was scarcely in less difficulty. In agitation she was even worse; for which indeed her natural modesty might account; for surely in this she was the purest creature on earth. She had indeed one advantage over him. She knew that he loved her, and had professed to do so, while he was ignorant of *her* sentiments. But she knew also that she loved him, and that the affection he was about to proffer, which might have been the joy and blessing of her heart, she herself would be forced to reject, nay to pray might be extinguished.

Never were two people who loved, or did *not* love

one another, so disconcerted at being left alone together as Tremaine and Georgina.

Her father's quitting the room seemed to plunge her into a difficulty, from which she could only be relieved by quitting it too; and this perhaps she would actually have done, had not Tremaine gathered courage to seat himself close by her; and seizing her hand with that one of his which was free, began the conversation he had so long meditated.

"My dearest Georgina," said he,—"suffer me so to call you, even though it may be for the last time. Would to God I might add to it, my own Georgina!"

Georgina left her passive hand in his.

"Your excellent father has, I believe, related to you the conversation I had with him in that eventful morning of yesterday."

"It was indeed eventful," said Georgina, looking at his wounded hand; "and you must have thought me shamefully ungrateful, not even yet to have enquired after the hand that so kindly saved me."

"Alas!" answered Tremaine, "I thought not of that when I called the morning eventful. I was more selfish. I referred to what was of far more consequence than this trifling accident. I alluded to my heart's best secret; which, however conscious of it, I believe nothing would have torn from me, but the fear (groundless as it has turned out) of a younger

and more suitable competitor for Miss Evelyn's favour: for, believe me, I thought that favour a treasure far too rich for *me*."

Georgina felt these words in her very heart, over which they shed a sweetness that was delicious, spite of all the disappointment which she feared might await her. It was perhaps this very sweetness that deprived her of the ability either of answering or of withdrawing the hand which still remained in the possession of Tremaine: resting the other, therefore, on the back of her chair, she leaned her cheek upon it, and covered her eyes with its pretty fingers. She thus seemed all ear, and waited for him to go on.

"It is most true," continued he, "that when I surveyed your lovely beauty, joined to a goodness and good sense, an innocency as well as elegance of mind such as I never saw equalled, I thought you would be the last best gift of heaven to him who might eventually gain you. To win, to obtain so invaluable a blessing, was the difficulty; and when I considered myself—I despaired."

He paused; and Georgina could answer nothing with her lips: but a slight, involuntary, and momentary, but still perceptible return to the pressure of his hand, seemed to ask him why he despaired.

"In many things," pursued he, "I thought we

were alike—in many I wished, and in some I hoped we might be so. You opened my eyes, even more than your father, to my defects; and my days, from having been a burthen to me, ran on with a sweetness, a lightness, such as I never knew till I knew you."

Georgina was more and more penetrated.

"My proximity to you," continued he, "on all occasions, left me no doubt to what this was owing; and my heart daily and momentarily felt that you alone were the cause of it."

Georgina whispered rather than said, he was a great deal too good; but, affected by all this avowal of his admiration and his tenderness, a tear trickled through the fingers that still covered her eyes, which, devouring her as he did with his, he could not fail to perceive.

His heart dilated with joy; and a delicious hope, which can be imagined only by those who have felt it, seemed to take possession of him, spite of all Evelyn's prognostics.

"Yes," continued he, "I could have no doubt who and what was the sweet anodyne to the canker which consumed me,—out of humour with myself, with mankind, and particularly I fear with womankind, until my sweet and lovely neighbour redeemed the whole sex by convincing me I was wrong. How deeply (suspecting no danger or disappointment

where I knew not at first that I had presumed to form a hope) how deeply did I drink of this comfort, till my senses were overcome; and I have waked only to a greater and more lasting misery than before."

"Oh! Mr. Tremaine," said Georgina, now finding her voice, "why all this?—what can your meaning be?"

She stopt; and he instantly replied, "My meaning is, Georgina, that I cannot be the coxcomb to presume, that with such disparity of years between us, the friend and school companion of your father, I could ever obtain more than your esteem. To inspire you with those sentiments, that warmth and eagerness of affection, which yet I should be fool enough to look for in the person I sought for my heart's companion—to do this, I should despair."

"Oh! if that were all!" exclaimed Georgina, while a stifled sigh, amounting even to sobbing, prevented her from going on.

"In my turn, my dear Georgina," said Tremaine. "let me ask what can your meaning be?"

"Alas!" answered Georgina, gathering strength and fortitude to proceed with her purpose, "how little would the disparity you talk of be, in my eyes, if there were no other cruel disagreement between us!"

"I will not affect to misunderstand you," replied

Tremaine, "for I have gathered all from your father; but tell me, sweet girl, is it possible I have heard aright, and from your own lips—is it possible, (I beseech you to bless me again with the assurance, if true,) is it possible that I could really aspire to your love, were all these disagreements, which you call so cruel, removed?"

Georgina immediately became again abashed, and returning to her former position, only covering her face still more with her hand, she asked, in a hesitating subdued voice, "Does my present behaviour shew that Mr. Tremaine's attentions can be unwelcome to me?"

Tremaine's whole frame became at these words inflated with a joy which his life had never known. He raised her hand to his lips, and was very near throwing himself at her feet, when he exclaimed,

"Then all my soul has desired is accomplished, for all other difficulties are as nothing."

"Stop," said Georgina, assuming all her decision, and disengaging herself from his arms; "we must not go on thus. Would to heaven the difficulties you speak of were really nothing! But my father has told you, and I confirm every word he has said, that if the tenderness you have avowed to me were even more dear to me than I own it is, it would be impossible to gratify your wishes, or my own, while you think of the most sacred, most awful things, as I fear you do."

"What," asked Tremaine, mournfully, "has your father represented of my opinions?"

"Alas! I fear he is too accurate to have misunderstood, and is too just to misrepresent them: and we lament, if I may presume to join myself with him on such an occasion, what he calls the ruin, as to sacred things, of a mind too noble in every thing else not to inspire every one with the sincerest esteem."

"Has he then related no particulars?"

"Oh! yes! but I beseech you, spare the sorrowful account. To think that you own no providence, no care of the Almighty here, and still less hereafter, fills me with terror only to be equalled by the grief of thinking that it is you who do this."

Her agitation, from mingled sorrow and tenderness, here became extreme.

Tremaine was infinitely moved; his love was only more and more excited, and had he not been probity itself, he was ready to have fallen at her feet, and confessed himself as to religion, of any creed she would be pleased to prescribe.

But he *was* probity itself, and so wholly the reverse of hypocrisy, that to have gained the world's treasure, in this love-inspiring girl, he would not have assumed it for a moment.

"Oh! sweet and admirable girl," he exclaimed, "sweet as thy youth, and admirable as thy beauty,

how shall I answer you so as to appease your distress, and yet preserve my own character with you for the honour you allow me? How can I show you the frankness you deserve, when by doing so I probably destroy my hope of you for ever? Have you really considered this matter? is your resolution fixed? is it the spontaneous act of your deliberate mind? or is it your father's counsel that sways you, not your own?

"Oh my own, my own," replied Georgina—"for were it even possible, (which it is not,) for my father to have counselled me differently, such is my horror, —oh! excuse me such a word—alas! that ever I should apply it to one who———," her emotions prevented her from finishing.

"Am I then an object of horror to you Georgina?"

"The Almighty knows my wretchedness in using the word," returned Georgina: "I would say rather my terror, my grief—but whatever it be, it is so strong, lest the guide of my mind, as well as the master of my heart, should lead me into such errors, that were my affection fixed beyond all power to move it, I should dread, and would refuse to gratify it."

"Noble girl!" cried Tremaine; "but surely reasonable as noble; and if so will you not hear me?"

"Oh gladly yes! if you will confess we are mistaken."

Tremaine was severely pushed in his turn. His heart's best hope hung on the answer he might chuse to give to this one question. But his truth prevailed. Recovering therefore from the struggle, he contented himself with saying, "of this we will talk farther; at present I only wish to observe upon your fear that I should lead you into such errors. Whatever my opinions, (and I really know not that I have been correctly represented,) think not I would attempt to mislead you, or lead you at all. If therefore the most perfect freedom in your sentiments, uninfluenced by me; if the most solemn promise to abstain from even the assertion of my own in your presence; in short a sacred compact that the very subject shall not even be mentioned between us; if this can ensure your peace, and deliver you from your fears, by the honour you are so kind as to ascribe to me, I swear to adhere to such a promise in all the amplitude you can possibly prescribe. One exception indeed I possibly might ask of my Georgina, and that is, that I might be myself her pupil, until her innocent nature had so purified mine, as at least to leave no hindrance from prejudice to my arriving at truth. Lastly, should I really be thus blest, and should our union increase the number of those inte-

rested, I would leave them all to the direction and tutorage of him in whom my Georgina would most confide—that excellent and pious man from whom she herself derives her principles, as her birth."

A proposal so congenial to her every feeling, so agreeable to her wishes, so soothing to her fears, so flattering to her hopes, so encouraging to all her prepossessions, made the most vivid and visible impression upon her firmness. It staggered much of her resolution, and had well nigh overpowered her whole purpose at once. Nor would perhaps the most virtuous, the most pious have blamed, or at least refused to have excused her, had she yielded to terms so delightful to her heart.

"Oh! Mr. Tremaine," she replied, in a hesitating, irresolute, but at the same time the softest voice in the world, "do not thus use your power over the heart whose secret you have surprised. Tempt not, I implore you, the affection I have owned, and never will deny. Rather assert the generosity that belongs to you, that distinguishes you, I should say, from all other men whatever, and assist a poor weak creature, struggling to do what is right; assist her against herself!"

"Ah! dearest Georgina," replied Tremaine, "what an appeal do you make! and how could I withstand it, if really there were any thing wrong or unreasonable in my proposal? But why shock me

by the supposition that I would tempt that purest of hearts to any thing against itself? Why imagine that I, who would lay down my life to preserve any one of your principles, on which your honour or happiness depended, would for a selfish purpose seek to seduce those principles, or weaken the resolution that guarded them? Be more just to the man whom you have so exalted by your dear, your delicious confession."

"Oh! talk not to me thus," answered Georgina. "You task my weakness to withstand what you know to be your strength, and which nothing but heaven, in whose cause I feel I am a sacrifice, can enable me to resist,—if indeed I can resist it!"

Tremaine saw all his advantage elicited by the frankness of this speech, and to his eternal honour let it be recorded, that he did not push it in the moment when perhaps the victory would have been his.

Reflecting an instant, he took her hand once more, and with the elevation that was at times peculiar to him, and at the same time a calmness proceeding from the sincerity of his purpose, "My soft, yet noble girl," said he, "no appeal of this sort could ever be made to me in vain, even if I were not, as I am, penetrated with gratitude for your kindness, and admiration at the honesty which has disdained to conceal it. Let me not therefore endeavour to push you when off your guard, or surprise you into promises

which your reason may hereafter repent. To avoid all this, and remove indeed from myself a temptation I cannot withstand, allow me to propose a reference of my offer to your father. In his hands even the dear prejudices of your heart in my favour will surely be safe, and should he decide for me, you cannot have a fear."

Georgina was penetrated to her heart at this honourable conduct. She looked at Tremaine with a confidence she had never ventured upon before. Her eyes fixed themselves upon him with an expression of affection indeed, but so mingled with respect, that it amounted to little short of veneration. It is very certain that the world did not seem to her ever to have contained a being with all his errors, like the person who then stood before her,

She could only ejaculate that he was the most generous of friends, and that she accepted the proposal. Nor could she deny herself to the fond embrace on which he now for the first time ventured; a ratification as he hoped, of a compact which would render them all in all to each other.

CHAP. XLIII.

NOT PERHAPS EXPECTED.

"Never shall you lie by Portia's side
"With an unquiet soul."

SHAKSPEARE.

If this were a work of fiction, (which I have often hinted it is not,) and I had power over events so as to make what facts I pleased, I should certainly here be for obeying the rules of poetical justice, and rewarding Mr. Tremaine and his lovely mistress, by making them one. I should only have to lay his proposal before the Doctor, who I think might fairly enough accede to it; and there would then want little to close the story, and the readers fatigue at once.

But this the truth forbids; for a far different fate awaited Tremaine, than perhaps it may be thought his generosity deserved. He was in fact not permitted even to make the experiment he had offered.

Agitated and unnerved beyond every thing she had before experienced in her life, Georgina broke from his arms, yet with a softness which only made

her ten thousand times more his than ever. She entreated for time and opportunity to compose herself.

"It will do me good," said she, "to be alone for a little while, to recall my scattered senses, which I seem to have lost. Heaven knows I little thought to have seen this hour. It has been a bitter one to me."

"It has been bitter," said Tremaine, "and yet there have been things in it that have made it the sweetest of my life. May I not hope that this sentiment is in some degree participated by my adored friend?"

The words were gratifying to Georgina, yet she gave a deep sigh, and loosened her hand from his, and repeating that what she had confessed she never would deny, she said it was absolutely necessary for her to be alone. "Here," added she, "I am really too much in the power of my feelings."

Tremaine, respecting her as usual, told her she could not express a wish that was not a command to him; and raising her hand to his lips, which she shewed no disposition to oppose, he allowed her to retire.

In point of fact, he had himself almost the same necessity for solitude, if not to recover himself, at least to deliberate what course to pursue. His first purpose, which was to seek his friend, and lay his proposal before him, he checked. It is impossible

for him to agree to it, thought he, and then what becomes of this situation, which, with all its uncertainties, so delights me, that my senses are giddy with the thought of it!

In truth, strange as it may appear, though nothing was less determinate than his prospect, there was no moment of his life that had ever appeared so delicious to him. Such is always the effect, when we love, of the first avowal that our love is returned. Dreading to lose it, Tremaine became absolutely afraid to meet the friend whom he at first so resolutely intended to seek. He was but a few paces off, for Tremaine had seen him loitering within call, during his conference with Georgina; yet his heart sank, when his mind inclined him to join Evelyn in the garden. Longing therefore to be alone, to hug himself as it were in the thought that he was beloved by her, whom alone of all the world he thought worth loving, and wishing besides for time to examine himself more closely than he had ever yet done, in order to see whether he could not really in some degree approach the wishes of the adored of his heart,—he fairly shrank for the moment from his purpose, and ordering his horses to follow him, took the road on foot to his own park.

As he passed up the avenue that led from the house, he could not help turning to take a view of what was now so much dearer than ever to

him. Georgina's chamber was in that front, and at the window at that moment, reclining with her head on her hand, and showing the whitest, and most graceful arm in the world, he beheld Georgina herself.

Their surprise was mutually great at seeing each other again; Georgina's in particular; and he could not help returning, if only to apprise her of his intention to pass an hour or two at home, after which he would have the honour of waiting upon her again. She bowed and kissed her hand with the grace that always so enchanted him, and while he lingered in sight, at least as long as it was necessary, often did he turn to give and receive greetings, the proofs of the mutual understanding which now informed them.

But alas for Tremaine! it is needless to recount the occupation that engaged him, or the trains of thought into which he fell; the plans he revolved, or the agitations he underwent, during the four hours immediately after his return home. His loiterings on the way, his seclusions afterwards in the closest walks of his gardens and shrubberies, and a long letter to Evelyn, the result of his meditation:—all this, as it would probably not have brought him nearer to his purpose, so in effect it was rendered abortive before the experiment could be tried, by a packet which was now delivered to him. The packet came from Eve-

lyn, and enclosed a letter from Georgina, in addition to his own.

Evelyn's was very short, though very kind. It told him that Georgina had herself rendered the generous proposal of which she had apprised him abortive, by a resolution she had taken even previous to her communicating it to him, and had begged him to transmit it in the letter he enclosed. It concluded with an expression of admiration of his honourable conduct, and a fond wish that his principles might yet change—change however from conviction, without which, he agreed with Georgina in deprecating for a time their future intercourse.

Good God! what was the situation of Tremaine on reading these indistinct allusions—indistinct, yet seemingly of so decisive a kind. Georgina's packet was seized in a sort of despair, and his hand trembled as if palsied, while it broke the seal, and he read as follows:

"To the most generous and noble of men,

"Such has my heart long thought you, and never so much as in this cruel moment, when the most painful sense of duty forces me to forego all that that heart can wish to value.

"If there is indecorum or impropriety of any kind in confessing this, surely it may be forgiven after what has so recently passed, and as a poor relief to the sorrow which dictates what I am about to write—

if I can write. The secret of my inmost bosom you are possessed of; nor scarcely do I regret that it has been unveiled. I will never retract it, never disguise the effect which accomplishments, goodness, and delicate kindness, kindness such as I never before knew, have had upon the friend you have been pleased to distinguish. Ah! that you had not been so generous, that you were less candid, less good, less noble! how much of this bitterness would then be spared me! How comparatively easy the struggle that seems to burst a heart, which feels (alas! that I should use such language), that it cannot be your's and God's at the same time!

"Oh! that your mind, so admirable in all honourable principle, so alive to tenderness, and all that a woman can love, would open to religious truth!—That it will, that it must, is my persuasion, my conviction as well as my wish. But till it does so, forgive a poor struggling girl, (who is miserable in either alternative), if she has acquired force of mind enough to sacrifice her fondest, softest wishes, to what she conceives, nay is sure is her duty.

"Oh! Mr. Tremaine, think not this resolve has been made without effort, without even pain and sorrow, which on my knees I have prayed fervently of that God to whom I have made this sacrifice, may be spared to *you*. I who alone am doomed to afflict you, ought alone to be the sufferer—and ah! believ

that I do suffer. The tears which flow while I write, heaven will I hope forgive, though the feeling that prompts them seems to rebel against that heaven while they do flow. I trust that strength will be given me to control the weakness, (shall I call it so?) that makes me falter. Yet if you should mistake or misjudge me; if the man who I have confessed is the master of my heart, and who has given me the rich gift of his own, should suppose that I am capricious or unsettled in my knowledge of myself—that my affection is lightly won, or easily parted with—sacrificed in short to any thing but my God—dearly and terribly will my misery be enhanced. But Mr. Tremaine is too just to do this. It is my wretchedness to think that he cannot perhaps appreciate the extent and urgency of the duty which governs me, even to the seeming extinction of my happiness. But he will at least allow for my principles; he will think me a sincere, and not look down upon me as a wavering woman.

"Hear then the result of my pure, my sacred, and as far as human influence is concerned, my unassisted resolve.

"Loving, reverencing, and fearing God as I do, adoring him in his providence, and humbling myself before him with trembling resignation, it revolts me to think that he who could absorb my earthly love, my fondest attachment, my whole reverence and es-

teem, should think little of all these sacred feelings; that he should disparage my mind's most ardent devotion; should not only not participate, but by his conduct seem to resist, all that my soul holds most awful and dear:—all this terrifies me even at this distance to think of. What would it do if the thought were daily and hourly worked up into every act of my future life? What would be the effect of this vital difference practically shewing itself, where all ought to be union without alloy?

"Forgive me, oh! forgive me, if I feel sure that it could not come to good; that to you I could not be *your* Georgina, the Georgina you have fancied; and that to *me* you could not be that unerring, that infallible guide, to whom I would on all occasions commit my spirit to be directed, 'As from my Lord, my Governor, and King.'

"'Tis true you made an offer that penetrated my heart, and shook my resolution—nay overcame it. But how, and in what moment? Ah! let your own heart answer, and say what place there then was for reason or resolution, when the sudden surprise of tenderness displaying itself for the first time—no, I am sure this will not be fixed upon me, by the most generous of men, to my disadvantage. The prayers I afterwards poured out to the Ruler of all things, were heard; and God has given me strength to address you as I ought. It is he, and not I, that tells

you your proposal, generous as it is, would of necessity be abortive—that my unhappiness at your doubts would not be the less because they were concealed, and that you would not the less lament my supposed weakness, because you had kindly consented, as you thought, never to probe it. It is the voice of God, and not mine, that tells you this.

"How weak mine alone would be, my throbbing heart indeed too fatally convinces me. Listen then to this powerful voice, that implores you to seek him with fervour and sincerity. Seek, and you shall find him; and when you *have* found him, need I say that you have found me. But till then, though shattered, unnerved, torn with contending emotions, and weighed to the ground with distress, my way is yet clear before me—pointed out by Heaven itself; nor dare I swerve from it. Alas! that I should have to say it leads me from *you*, I can scarcely write the words; my kind father will tell you the rest: and it is my weakness (throwing itself upon *you* for support), that bids me add the necessity there is until a happier time shall dawn, that we should meet no more."

It will not be easy to describe the thousand contending feelings that agitated Tremaine, nay tore him to pieces, while reading this letter. It was long before he could be said to understand the meaning of the words, which yet he read over a fourth and a

fifth time, before he gave himself breath to ask what it was that had been addressed to him; for he could scarcely comprehend what it was he was called upon to do, to say, or to unsay—in short, how to act towards Georgina, her father, or himself.

Shall we say that he was piqued—that the hectic of a moment ——— Yes! for his natural irritability did for that moment flash across his cheek, and he was piqued even with his adored Georgina. Alas! how soon to lose the little courage it gave him! how soon to sink lower and lower in all the bitterness and grief of disappointment! How did he even execrate himself for having, for that scarcely perceptible moment, thought (for it vanished before he could give it utterance), that Georgina had wavered, had been weak, had been unjust! Too soon indeed was he deprived of this cruel consolation, in order to plunge into all the despair of increased love and admiration—increased an hundred fold by the fortitude she had displayed.

Yet so near the fruition of all his hopes! To have had all his fears, his jealousies of himself and others so completely allayed! To have been told things by herself that quieted all his alarms, and breathed sweetness into his very soul, seemingly for ever: yet to be deprived of all this, as soon as told!

It must be owned it required a self-possession more than human, to receive such tidings with equanimity.

It far surpassed Tremaine's, and having recovered from the sort of stupefaction into which he first fell, nd afterwards from that quick throb of pride which as been mentioned,—and which lasted for six or at most ten pulses,—misery and agitation, and wonder, hesitation and irresolute purpose, yet mixed, if I may so say, with resolute despair, all got possession of him, and all left him by turns. The only thing certain and permanent about him was his misery.

And now, reader, shall we close this account, and leave the rest to conjecture? Willingly would we do so rather than have to record the unhappiness, nay, the wretchedness, of the excellent Georgina.

It must however be recorded, for it involved her in a struggle which, day after day, and week after week, consumed her, till it proved to be beyond her strength, and ended at length in a decline of health which sank the good Evelyn as well as herself to the brink of the grave.

It is certain that the abandonment of Woodington (for it was abandoned) by its owner, left a blank in Evelyn Hall, which nothing could fill up. Its occupations, useful and innocent, and therefore happy; its comforts, its cheerfulness, and even its hospitalities, seemed to have left it for ever; and many a time has honest Jack been known to stop his horse as he rode across the avenue, and shaking his head, observe, while a tear unchecked would course down his cheek,

that the chimnies did not smoke as they used to do. The poor indeed came as usual, and as usual never were turned away; but the cottagers no longer ran out to their little gates in the eagerness of joy, to welcome dear Miss Georgy, and tell her how pure rosy she looked:—to hope she was better, and that the fever had left her, and then return to their wheels or chimney-corners, with blank looks and sighing hearts, was now the sad termination of interviews once so exhilarating.

As to Evelyn, bowed to the earth, and nearly broken-hearted, his resignation only kept him from sinking quite. And who shall describe the look with which he sometimes contemplated the fading face he so much loved, or the agony with which, in his closet, or his solitary walk, he commended his amiable daughter to the protection of her God!

END OF VOL. II.

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